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THE MASTER-MISTRESS
POEMS BY ROSE O'NEILL

With drawings by the author

The master-mistress of my passion.

—*Shakespeare*

NewYork/ALFRED·A·KNOPF/1922

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TO THE FOUR WINDS

Thanks are given to Messrs. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, and to the Messrs. Harper for permission to re-print some earlier poems from my novels, *The Loves of Edwy* and *The Lady in the White Veil.*

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THE MASTER-MISTRESS

All in the drowse of life I saw a shape,
A lovely monster reared up from the restless rock,
More secret and more loud than other beasts.
It, seeming two in one,
With dreadful beauty doomed,
Folded itself, in chanting like a flood.
I said, "Your name, O Master-mistress?"
But it, answering not,
Folded itself, in chanting like a flood.

I BRING THIS WEIGHT

I bring this weight of savage singing here,
  Fitting for you who feast upon fierce things,
Like to one running from a wood in fear
And triumph terrible, who strongly brings
  A bright beast held beneath his rended dress.
    Hilarious distress
Of Spartan folly fainting with its prize,
  Of tearing trophy, burning boon and glee!
    But, oh, arise,
  And get me from my fangèd captive free!
Oh, come, oh quickly lift the cloak, and see
  Him gleaming, ere too deep he diggeth me!

THE SONNET BEGS ME

The Sonnet begs me like a bridegroom,
"Come within."
"This palace! Not for me, the desert-born!"
I turn me, as from some too lordly sin,
And like a singing Hagar, pause and pass—
To lift for night's sweet thieves my houseless horn
In broken rhythms of the windy grass.
I will not be the measure-pacing bride,
But where the flutes come faintly,
Sing outside.
Like drifting sand my love doth drift and change—
I strangely sing because my love is strange.

IRISH SONG

And over the lone wet places,
With your heart half sick in the stumbling dark,
And your breath going wild with the hurry,
I hear you coming to me again!

I hear you coming and calling,
Knowing me not for the Lonely, the Lost One,
The Gone, Gone, Gone, for all of your panting;
Your gold eyes finding me never again.

HUNTERS OF HEAVEN

Hunters of Heaven,
  Halloo!
Over the moon!
On the track of the hurrying Heaven
With hounds! The horn and the tune
Of the hunters pursue
The silvery panting,
The radiant runner that flew,
That sped like a spear,
That battled with eagles for height,
And trampled the stars that would stay him
With heavenly fierceness and fight!

Hunters of Heaven,
  Halloo!
We are hot on his crystal heels,
His flanks are dripping with dew,
His bright knees falter and stay,
He sighs as he goes!
He faints with the horror of horns!
Oh my prize! Oh, imperial prey!
Oh, crested! Oh rose!
But no! He is fled, he is gone,

With heavenly laughter and cries!
He strikes off the hands of the worlds,
He leaps on the walls of the skies!
Far from his hunters that weep,
Safe from his lovers—his foes,
Into the uttermost deep,
Gleaming, he goes!

Hunters of Heaven, go down!
He dies not, 'tis we that shall die!
Each to his town
And be comforted;
Each to his gray, gray town
And his bed;

But not I!
Not I, who faint and fall,
Returning no more at all.
On the leaves of the moon the stain
Of the broken vein,—
  It is red!
Never again,
The hounds and the hunters' tune;
It is red on the paths of the moon!

THE SON

(He Complains of Dying too Soon.)

Oh, mother, it is hard to die
  When a man is twenty-one,
A good team hoofing in the stalls,
  And half the ploughing done;
And meadow acres of our own,
  All steaming in the sun!
    Ah, weary, weary, be at peace.
    Lie still, my bonnie son.

Oh, mother, mother—hard to die—
  And it this time of year!
When little leaves are coming out
  And hopeful buds are here. . . .
And no maid ever leaned on me,
  Nor any called me, "Dear!"
    'Tis Jesu Christus calling thee:
    His words are kind and clear.

Oh, in the village, once, a maid. . . .
  Her corsage was untied. . . .
A little button had gone wrong:
  I saw two doves inside!
But once to hold them in my hand—

Those doves—before I died!
Think on the Dove of God, my son.
His wings are soft and wide.

And once, oh mother, in the grass,
Beneath the apple trees,
There was a careless maid asleep—
I saw two silken knees:
I dreamed my waist was girdled round
With silken charities.
Oh, little son, how can you speak
Such wild, wild words as these!

And, mother, I have rolled in bed
Until the dawn of light,
With heart a-bursting in my side
For dreams of strange delight—
Of something lily pale and soft
That kept me warm at night.
Oh, weary, weary, be at peace.
The angels' wings are white.

You always gave me good, wool hose,
And plenty of ale and bread,
But mother, mother, you never gave
A woman in my bed!
And so, until the crack of doom,
I'll sleep cold, now I'm dead!
Oh, little son, would I had died
Ere ever these words you said!
(Oh, Jesu Christus, crucified!)

THE SEVEN FAREWELLS

The birds were crying in the ways,
  The cuckoo and the doves,
When I took seven summer days
  To farewell my seven loves.

And first, I took a long, long day
  To gaze and say goodbye,
And slowly turn my soul away
  From the wonder of the Eye.

Another deep day was used up
  Upon the most caressed;
I leaned and whispered to the Cup—
  I parted with the Breast.

And next, from when the sun did rise,
  Until the evening fell,
I looked, and never turned my eyes,
  But bade the Lip farewell.

The Lip that spoke as singing birds
  Lived in its crimson door—
The Lip, the honied home of words,
  It smiled and spoke no more.

Then, till a long day's dripping sands
  The glass had all run through,
I held the Feet in my two hands
  And bade the Feet adieu.

Then I entreated of my heart
  If counselling there be
Of that strange alabaster art,
  How to farewell the Knee.

That white impossible was done:
  But, unaccomplished now,
Although I strove from sun to sun
  To finish with thy Thou.

This nameless Thou with sealèd eye
  It leaned across the day,
And when I tried to say goodbye
  It turned my tongue to clay.

THE WIND ALONG THE LEAVES

In the valley restless,
Where the birds are nestless,
All my hearts are shaking
Like blown water quaking,
For the wind along the leaves has made me mad.

Where my selves are walking
They wake me with their talking,
Where the dark is riding
There is something hiding,
And the wind along the leaves has made me mad.

The river never tarries
For dread of what she carries;
The low ones who go creeping
In the wood are weeping,
And the wind along the leaves has made me mad.

There are too many faces
In the darkling places,
Where the wet roots glisten
Too many lean and listen,
And the wind along the leaves has made me mad.

There is too much meaning
Where the trees are leaning,
And the rocks conferring
Make a fearful stirring;
The wind along the leaves has made me mad!

ZANZOS

Oh, it's down the world to Zanzos,
  Down the world with lovers twain,
But it's killed with other kisses
  That I come back again.

For they left me there to follow
  Foam-flowers fair and sad,
And they left me there in Zanzos,
  In Zanzos to go mad.

For affairs are strange in Zanzos,
  Such a state of things prevails,
That you cannot tell the women
  From the nightingales.

So as I came back from Zanzos
  With the gulls that wheeled and whirled,
I was singing-sick with Zanzos,
  And went crying up the world.

The people wondered much to see
  My phosphorescent shine,

And said they'd never met before
Such an antic face as mine.

They said that they had never met
A woman quite so fair,
Who made such lisping with her lips,
As if she kissed the air.

The wharfman asked where I was born,
I waved to all the tides—
And whither I was journeying,
I leaned against their sides—

And if I carried treasure,
I waved to all the ships.
They searched a night, they searched a day,
But did not search my lips.

I blindly smiled, my feet were wild,
My lips were quaint and curled,
For as I came back from Zanzos,
I went reeling up the world.

THE DOOM-BRIDE

What is it there, coming over the lonely,
  The long heath-side?
Is it the shake of the alder-trees only,
  Where the winds ride?
Or is it the walk of the Strangers that never
  Can tell or turn?
Or is it the bog-mist that carries forever
The dead fairy children that cannot be buried
  In fen, or fern,
The little dead Funs that are harried and hurried
For fear of wild saints that have blessed the land
      direly,
  Sealing the ground,
For vain, little fay-graves too holy entirely.

  Is it a sound?
Or is it a sleep, or a sorrow that glimmers,
  Beginning its plain?
Or the coat of a poor, needy ghost there, that
      shimmers,
  Ragged as rain?
Or is it the leaves that are frightened at Goers
  That no leaf sees?

Or the old king that paces out, when the night
lowers,
Dead, at his ease?

Then, *what* is it there, coming over the dreary,
The dread heath-side?
There is no world-woman so wild or so weary,
Where the winds ride!
The Doom-bride the fierce priest of Kerry cursed
on me
For my sin and grief!
'Tis the walk of the Doom-bride that's down and
upon me!
Farewell, Mary Keefe!

MY DARKNESS

Oh come, my darkness!
There has been too much of light,
Too much of heaping noon.
Give me the empty night!
And let there be
No ministration of the moon,
Nor gold along the sea.

Let no leaf
Turn argent, and no tree
Be quickened into silver grief:
Fold up the arduous bright;
Beat down and still
The howling of the kennelled will
And hungry hounds of sight!
Oh come my darkness!

THE FLYING DEAD

The wind was full of withered leaves,
  The golden and the red;
They cried to one who hid his eyes,
  "Follow the flying dead.

Come loose your soul from off the bough
  Where it doth hang and sigh,
And give it to the long-maned wind
  And see your dead soul fly.

And loose your heart from off the stem
  Where it doth pulse and pale,
And on the sea of running air
  Let your dead heart sail.

For only the dead are travellers,"
  The wild leaves sang and said.
"Follow, follow, follow,
  Follow the flying dead!"

THE HIGH HOUSE

I built a hundred houses,
  I built them one by one;
But all my pretty houses
  Were too small when they were done:

But all my little houses
  Leaned upon my head,
And all their little roof-beams
  Crowded me in bed.

And then I said, I'll build a house,
  A house both wide and high,
A house that will be fitting
  For as tall a man as I.

I build you high, I build you wide,
The buttresses along your side,
Bull-shouldered, crouched against my prize
And braced your bulk with burly thighs.

I heaped you high with many a tower
And piled your parapets with power,
Your ramparts rode the world like lords,
Your turrets hurt the sun like swords.

And there were halls as large as France,
And fifty where a man might dance,
A hundred more for love and sleep:
The tallest, where a man could weep.

But houses that are built too high
  Have souls as high again,
And houses that hob-nob the sky
  Turn from the tallest men.

So, when my house was capped and done,
  And I would in and bide,
My house, you leaned against the sun,
  And heavily you sighed.

Then, with a mighty groan you reared
  Your helmet like a war,
And, as your mighty tears appeared,
  You shut your mighty door.

ESTABLISHED

I made a house of houselessness,
  A garden of your going:
And seven trees of seven wounds
  You gave me, all unknowing:
I made a feast of golden grief
  That you so lordly left me,
I made a bed of all the smiles
  Whereof your lip bereft me:
I made a sun of your delay,
  Your daily loss, his setting:
I made a wall of all your words
  And a lock of your forgetting.

A DREAM OF SAPPHO

She slowly came, I knew her by the sign,
And fair she was, but far more strange than fair.
I knew her by the roses in her hair,
Pierian, and she saluted mine,
Lifting her pale hand in that gesture high
The deathless use to those that cannot die.

(She bore a purple napkin for her lap;
Her sandal had a fair-wrought Lydian strap.)

She touched my lyre and listened—while she seemed
As one dimmed in some doubtful dream re-dreamed;
Then, ah, the voice she from those lips released,
All birds and bees and singing in a sigh—
"Once, with a thing like this—" she said, and ceased.

And then,
That flowery fluting fell again;

"I passed, as some far, careless queen doth pass,
While, gem by gem, her broken necklace streams:
Perhaps one follows, finding fearful gleams,
Long after in the pale, pale grass."

I said, "None with more living lives
Than those fierce fugitives!"

"But I am dead," she said, "the violet-twined
Is dead with *that which never man can find.*"

"Rubies enough," I weeping said,
And red to broider all thy bed!"

Then she, with queenhood most ineffable,
Put by her golden throat's bereaven swell:
"Stand up, O friend," she said, "stand face to face,
And of thy hidden eyes unveil the grace!"

Then with what looks we leaned and gazed long while!
Drunkard meets wreathèd drunkard with *that smile!*
And what full-lyred beaker brimmèd up,
With wet lips meeting on the honied cup!
And as sweet drunkards, reeling, spill
The crested waves of cups they fill,
With lovely laughs, inside the purple vest,
So we with laughter, staggered breast to breast.

I wake, the book drops from my dreaming hand,
As now thy palm august falls out of mine.
Oh, where is that strong singing! Where the wine!
Prevailing lip! And leafy brow of thine!

Only the long sea and the Lesbian strand!
Art thou but sand that blows with trodden sand?
Where is thy burning hand. . . .

THE MUSE IN THE DOOR

I do not know your name,
  Nor your fate.
You come as you came before.
  You are late,
But you and mine are the same.
Submitted to me, once more!
  You carry the sign—
You are late,
  But mine!

You are mine, as you were before!
  For you and mine are the same.
    You are lame.
  You pause in the door,
With desire and danger and doubt.
You detach from the wind without—
You are mine, as you were before,
You are slow for pity and pride.
  Ah, you are lame, but mine!
    You carry the sign—
The vultures in your side!

  You are he whom the beaks defile.
  You are faint from the walls you broke.

You smile.
You are bright and bereft,
You are heavy with theft!
There is fire in your cloak!
Master of stealth! You are he!
Mine to compel or refuse!
And you are released to me
As Barabbas was loosed to the Jews!

POET TO POET

To my Singing Brother, C. G. O 'N.

Since you are with me now, my Bird,
I sing alone no more,
We go with many a silver word
Where we have wept before.

We go with many a silver sound,
Where once we went so still,
We take the forest for a hound,
And chase the bounding hill.

We chase the bee where honey drips,
We chase the chanting morn,
We put the forest to our lips
And blow it like a horn.

We shake the forest like a flag,
Like banners burning red,
Our words are running with the stag—
With leaves the wind has sped.

Our words are running with the hare
The hunters never find,

Whose feet are like the purple air
  That leaves the pack behind.

But ah, no hunter ever heard
  Such cries as we let out,
Since you are with me now, my Bird,
  With echoes leagued about.

The echoes all take hands and dance
  When you set up your song;
The hairy hiders peep and prance
  And love and listen long.

The hairy hiders weep their fill
  O'er singing's aftermath,
To find the wine-red words you spill
  Along the leafy path.

And wine-red words leap up and sing,
  And high boughs sing for pain,
While thrushes wait and hush their wing,
  And rivers hush the rain.

And Life it sings of Death deferred,
  And Death sings lustily,
Since you are with me now, my Bird,
  As winds are with the tree!

SALE

"Sell all and follow me," you said.
I sold my wine. I sold my bread.
I sold my horses and my bed.
I sold my kings, I sold my crowns,
And then, I wept and sold my clowns.
I sold my armies and my state,
I sold my folly and my fate.
I sold my safety and my sun,
I sold my sorrows, one by one.
I sold the demons from my heart,
And saw my lovely fiends depart.

I sold my scarlet, sold my lords,
My altars, engines, scutcheons, swords,
My ships, my heroes, tower and town,
My roads, my ramparts, my renown.
I sold my sea, I sold my land,
I took my brave god by the hand,
I took my god and cloaked his face
And sold him in the market place.

Now, it is finished, and I wait,
Robbed and robust, without your gate,

You cry, "My beggar!" We embrace.
The golden tears run down your face.
The golden tears they ray and run;
"I asked too much!" you weep undone.
You stream and stream with piteous gold
On me, the bright, the bare, the bold.

THE MASTER OF POETS

From the deep the call of the Name!
I flew from the one that came,
The one that cried as he ran,
And calling on "Pan, Pan, Pan!"
For leafy succour, I fled.
But ever onward he sped
With lips that dripped from the vine
And purple splashèd knees
And a singing sound of trees
And looks that were wild with wine.

And ever beside him sprang,
Bright with the stripèd skin,
Strange shapes that sighed and sang
With golden din;
And lions with eyes of sard
And leopards and leapers whose thighs
Gave the goatling wide surprise:
While a smell of nameless nard,
With musk of roses and roots,
Fell from the runner that came
With a lyre in flame
And a flooding fury of flutes.

He came as the falcon flies,
Stretched beak and windy wings;
I, falling as one that dies,
Heard the Name that sweeps like a sword,
And a voice of thunderous things
That cried, "Iacchus, Lord!
Iacchus, Iacchus, Iacchus,"
Till the winds and the waves were dumb.
"Bromius! Master and Lover!
The curlèd Theban has come!
O, you that have leaves for cover,
Beat breasts with the love that is fear!
Hide from the Lovely, the Lover!
Dion, the Raging, is here!"

Then a murmur, that murmured as sweet
As lutes in far places that fade:
And I heard his crystal feet
That stole to my side and stayed.
And his call was the sound of the sea,
The 'plaining of rivers in rain,
The moan of all birds there be
That make singing in their pain.

I cried where I lay in the fern,
"O, you who are crushed as the grape,
Bid me not turn!
Let me see not your terrible shape!
O call not me but another!
Theban, to look is to burn

And go the way of your mother!
Bid me not turn!"

He ceased, as Philomel
Sinks fainting into the night,
With sighing sob remote,
Or, as a broken bell:
So ceased the viol-ing flight
Of thrushes in his throat.
But me the silence smote.
I looked as he who fears,
Turning, reluctant, for sight. . . .
I saw the red god white!
I saw his silver tears!

"My Lord, have I dreamed, or slept,
It seemed you were one that leapt
With lovely leapings and cries
And laughs in your lordly eyes
And heels of a dance-adept!
I could have laughed and dared
To embrace your side, all bared,
Frisk with your mighty knees,
And prank my fill and please
Me in coigns for kisses where
Deft sunbeams never dare,
Though they sigh
At the robe that blows awry.
I could have curled and clung
To so laughing a god and young,

Playing with your most fair
And deep, depending hair."
He said, "Give me your tongue
For my despair."

THERE WHERE THE NIGHT WAS TALL I LIFTED YOU

To Kallista

There where the night was tall, I lifted you,
  Tall as the night, and deep as depthless deep:
I based you on the under dark and drew
  The upper dark about your lips that sigh,
And hid with height your towering eyes that weep
  As weep incessantly the sootheless seas
  With grief of largeness ever unredressed;
Like some poor Titan, leaning on the sky
That finds no mighty bed to give him ease,
  Nor any monster's breast.

I DREAMED YOU WEPT

To Kallista

I dreamed you wept upon me in a dream;
  Your tears were strange—they ran a ruddy
    stream.

Then passion made me strong, I did unbind
  The sea to wash that stream incarnadined;
And where the winds were fastened in the skies,
  Untied their silken scarves to staunch your eyes.

I drove the shouldering mountains in a ring
  Like herds of bison bulls, rude bellowing,
That stoop their manèd heads, as at the brink
  Of some deep river where they roar and drink;
So at your rivering eyes, each hunch-back king
  Abased his boughs with spilling nests of spring:
Like plumes the iron pinetrees leaned about,
  The eagles doffed the sun from bending crests,
And all the horny innocents looked out
  From ferny flanks to wonder at your breasts.

You would not look into one feathered bed,

Nor stroke the mighty vassals that I led,
But turned away your lustrous eyes that bled.

I drove you deserts in a caravan
With heapèd camel and Mahomedan;
I brought you peaks with snowy hats that shone,
And caverns where dark waters made their moan,

And poets' tongues that quivered as I came,
And Night that pacèd like a purple dame,
And tender younglings, leopards, lambs and doves
And peacocks, and the lusty boy that loves.

I brought you lions; and a thousand years:
I bore you valleys full of rose and rain,
And desperate songs to ease you of your tears;
But still your flowery mouth it did complain.

Then passion made me tall, I heavèd me
Against the sky and shook it like a tree.
The stars flew out like birds with chirping tunes,
And from their boughs I loosened all the moons:
The moons they fell like apples in your lap
And told your knees their silverine mishap;

Your silver knees were weary of the weight,
Your lap lamented of its moony state,
And from the fallen fruitage of the skies
You hid the beauteous bleeding of your eyes.

FORGOTTEN PATRICK

Ah, Forgotten Patrick, it is long now,
It is long and long now, since we left you.
Where you walked, Forgotten Patrick, in the wild
grass,
With us beside you, noticing your dark hair
And the little funny corners of your smiling.

Who'd 'av' thought that we could do without you,
And do so well without you, in the main, too.
Without you and your whimsy ways and talking!
(You, the plain and quiet fellow 'neath the wild
grass!)

But it's better to forget you and be easy,
Than be sitting half the needy night and staring
Out the way you went along the leaning wild grass,
And you, Forgotten Patrick, never looking.

TEARS

For there was never rain enough,
  Rain enough, rain enough, before,
To put out the fire, put out the fire
  In the burning core!

And now, that there is rain enough,
  Rain enough, rain enough and more,
Who died by fire dies by rain
  Behind the drowning door!

THE FAIRY HUSBAND

All in the shady
  Wood I met a lady
Who sighed full sore.
  I begged the reason
For grief in singing season,
But ever, more and more,
  The fair
Wept in her hair
And made a lovely wail.
  She said "I am so pale,
  And I complain of wings,
I am so pale for love of fairy things!

  I had a pretty husband,
  I had a fairy husband,
  I had a wingy husband,
But he went away.
  The wind it thieved me,
  The Moon bereaved me,
They stole my pretty husband for their play!
Before, at each dew-falling,
He would make owl-calling,

While some flower, shaking
  O'er his nest,
Proved he would be waking
  From his winking rest.
And I, wan with wonder,
Found him, in under,
  By his crimson vest;
  By his mooney eyes,
  By his silver thighs,
And his wings of the purple dragon flies.
  Wings, wings!
I am so pale for love of fairy things!

When, in the morning,
My mother came to my adorning,
  She would stare
At fairy trinkets in my hair;
  And cry surprise
At strangeness in my eyes.
  My father would be talking
  Of my soft walking,
For feet are faint that follow fays by night;
  And 'tis said
That elf-wives cheeks are white.
  I could not spin my thread,
So slow my hands for weight of elfin rings.
  But, ah, my heart was red!
So pale at last for love of fairy things!

Me he decked with prinking care,
  He, the wild tameless;

And brought me playthings, fierce and fair,
That must be nameless.
With moon-shoes for mine ease
So fine and flimsy,
And magic cloaks to please
That soul of whimsy.

My bed,
It had a cobweb spread
Woven all with pretties;
And when he put me in,
He made a lovely din
Of elfin ditties.
Far! It is far where now he sings,
And I am pale for love of fairy things!

I had a pretty husband,
I had a fairy husband,
I had a wingy husband,
But he went away:
The wind it thieved me,
The moon bereaved me,
They stole my pretty husband for their play."

THE OWL

The Owl!
Ah, the gray, gray owl!
When I was sighing,
Near unto dying,
It was the owl that called me where I bled.
To hark, I ceased me,
The fiends released me.
It is the owl that putteth men to bed.

The owl!
Ah, the darkling owl!
If he speak to thee,
He will undo thee,
For all is naught save going where he led,
All naught but flying
Unto that crying;
And 'tis the owl that putteth men to bed.

The owl!
Ah, the hiding owl!
Why are men weeping
Who might be sleeping?
The thrall of sleep need never woo nor wed;

The steeds he rides are
More bright than brides are,
And 'tis the owl that putteth men to bed.

The owl!
Ah, the horny owl!
Who, that doth love thee
Would put above thee
Grecian Philomel who wounds the dead?
It is her fashion
To break souls with passion,
But 'tis the owl that putteth men to bed.

The owl!
Ah, the crying owl!
Hark, o'er the meadow,
The calling shadow!
And like a shade my soul to him hath fled.
Body lie starkly!
Soul riding darkly!
All with the owl that putteth men to bed!

OWL SINISTER

Ah, can you never still,
Unhealable complainer of the wounded will?
You Groan-in-the-dark,
You sobber of no shape,
And strong negation of the lark!
You wrong-recounter of no words!
Ape
Of lovely birds,
And hunchback of the singing breed!
You void! You, irremediable Need,
Make nothing of desire.
With long, cold, crying famine you put out the fire,
And esperances of the day rescind.
Eater of shadows! Ghoul and gullet of the wind!

THE SILENT HOUND

Down, my hound!
I am the stag,
And you the Mouth.
There is no sound,
No burst of baying
In this dumb, intentioned pressure toward the crag:
No howl of slaying,
No bleat of mine
From wild tongue carved in drouth.
No sound!
No red on the road for a sign;
Only our violence, still
As carnage seen in sleep,
Fierce with will,
And your leap
For your shuddering goal,
The throat of the desecrate—
I, the hurrying soul,
You, the fate!

No sigh, no sound!
We run!

We are not two, but one;
For you hang to my side.
You ride!
My hound!

SHE WROTE IT

To Kallista

She wrote, "only your own words
could tell you how I am loving you."

She wrote it, "Only your own words."
She, who called like bulls and birds,
She, who throbbed a thrushes throat
And bayed the wind back as he cried,
She, who moaned the pigeon's note
And shook the pinetree when she sighed:
Mistress of all words and wails,
Giving tongue with nightingales!

She, whose pea-cock coloured cries
Woke the dead man in his bed,
And fooled him back from Paradise,
With his pale heart turned to red:
She, the horn that warriors led,
Clamour of the larks that rise,
And viol of the swan that dies!

She wrote it! She, my lyric you!
You beat of drum, you lull of lute!

You voice of cataract and dew,
You verse, you violin, you flute!
You roar! You sound of loves that sue!
Tongue of the world, who pierce and coo!

WHERE THERE IS NO LARK

Where there is no lark,
And the Great Couch is spread,
Death stirring on his pillow in the dark,
Makes drowsy sounds of kissing in the dark,
And lifting up a shadow-wreathèd head,
Calls like a sleepy lover, "come to bed."

AS I WENT BY

As I went by,
An old man with a curded eye,
Said: "Much as you can laugh and kiss,
You will be like this."
And I did not believe him,
But made haste to leave him,
Laughing all the way.
Yet, another day,
He made the self-same say,
For my laughter grieved him.
And I believed him!
Then I shook
Like a willow in a brook,
Like the ox from the goad,
Like the slave beneath the load,
Like the reed under rain,
And the sick man in pain,
And the hind before the hound,
And the new corpse in the ground!

THE EAGLE HUNTER

I said: I will go down,
  Save me from hurts of height,
  Wounds of renown,
The spurning spears of light
And scorn of the gigantic flight.
  I will desist,
Give up the great antagonist;
  I will go hence
From this most dire magnificence
  And regal state
Of battle desperate;
  Resign
The hunt of eagles to the fine
And fierce essay, the dare-and-do
Of taller men and new.
  I will restore
Me to the valley's eve and noon,
And crack my heart no more,
But hide, in poor delight
  Of harmless things,
From haunt of height
And windy width of wings.

Let fly the towering prey,
Unwieldy as the moon!
I will go down and stay,
Be succoured by disgrace,
  Too mean for high mishap.
Be safe and low my chase,
No Titan in my trap
With conquered terror's mighty eye,
  And that great sigh
That makes the hunter pale!

Ah, let no sun-insulting sail
Of pinions tempt me now,
  From my low vow,
Nor giant shapes go by
Between me and the sky!

TWO PORTRAITS

I

He was so fine with youth, he seemed at feast:
  His unborn honours phantomed up with wings,
Like spears of dawn, before suns climb the east,
  With triumph of unconsummated things.

II

Then you came, kingly, decked in all your dead
  And panoplied with trophies of disgrace,
Fulfilment of defeat to crown your head,
  And all your perfect follies in your face.

THE FOUR GOATS

There are four goats upon the hill,
  There might have been but three;
One for Carnarvon, you and me,
Each with his long, long eye, and still,
There are four goats upon the hill.

And one is neither yours nor mine:
  There might have been a face
Like his in some far, other place,
His horn is like a wreathèd vine,
And he is neither yours nor mine.

THE TWO BONNIE LORDS

There were two bonnie lords
  And they rode and they rode,
There were two bonnie lords
And they rode!

There were two bonnie lords
  And they rode wide and weel,
Edward of Carnarvon
And Edward O'Neill.

There were two bonnie lords
  And they rode hound to heel;
One was a great Earl
And one chief of the Neill.

The two Edwards they were
  And one was a prince;
The other was fairer
Than any man since.

The other was so fair
  That men thought him a dame,
And Carnarvon, the bard,
Made a song of his name.

And the bard was a king
  With an eye like the sea,
And wherever he went
He sang lustily.

And wherever he went,
  And wherever he'd wend,
He only thought the more
Of his bonnie friend.

There were two bonnie lords,
  And they rode wide and well,
Across the bridge of heaven
And the parapets of hell.

And they rode and they rode,
  And when they came away,
It was strange spoil they carried
Across the night and day.

It was strange spoil they carried
  To deck out a queen,
And make the lady golden
That hung their breasts between.

There were two bonnie lords
  And they rode and they rode,
There were two bonnie lords
And they rode!

THE BEGINNING AND THE FULL OF LOVE

Ah, *then,* those angels in the wingy eyes,
Kinder than little stars that come not near
For fear of burning; silvery acolytes,
Swinging far, careful censors with averted face,
Too far to stir the garment, the untroubled hair—
White garment hardly trembled with a sigh. . . .

Now, now, the blood-red pallium's broidered
weight,
Wild, shaken banner of the onslaughting heart,
The heavy woof of flaming chains,
And wars of rubies!
The last fierce ornament of the full-robed love!

THE GOING

He told the stones the time was spent,
  He told the little stair,
And every gentle ornament
  The housewife dusts with care.

He told the fire and chimney-place,
  Confided to the mouse,
And quickly covering his face,
  He wept and told the house.

He cried it to the little bed,
  He breathed it to the bee,
He told the roses white and red,
  But he could not tell the tree.

THE LOVELY GOER

Who has slain the town?
Who slew the flutes in going?
Who left the wine un-flowing,
And weather-cocks un-crowing,
Where smiles are lost in snowing,
  Smiles of king and clown?
The dance it dims and dozes,
The song it fails and closes,
There is rain upon the roses
  And the flags are down.
Who left the rose un-glowing?
Who slew the flutes in going?
  Who has slain the town?

THE CRYING HEARTS

I sing the hearts that all night long
  Were broken on my breast,
Whose crying was as sweet as song,
  Accursèd and caressed;
Whose moan was sweet as murdered birds
That die with pretty 'plaining words.
    (My one, my two, my two in one,
      Hiding from the moon and sun!)

I put my bleating hearts to bed
  And folded back the day,
My pretty hornèd hearts that bled,
  I hid their wounds away:
And like two rivers, hid with leaves,
They sang as water sings and grieves.
    (My two, my one, my one in two,
      Hiding from the dark and dew!)

Of river leaves that dip and drown
  I made them covers deep;
My breast that staggered up and down,
  It rocked my hearts to sleep;

And like three rivers running strong,
They shook the leaves the whole night long.
(My one, my two, my two in three,
Hiding from all things that be!)

DEATH SHALL NOT EASE ME OF YOU

To Kallista

Death shall not ease me of you,
No, nor yet
That place where men go to forget:
That curious place
Where beds are made.
It shall not ease me of your face,
Nor I, in darkness laid,
Be ere untied
From the vine of your persisting side,
Nor flowers of your dissuadeless breast,
Nor rest
From wonder. Though I drew
The earthy cover all about
To succour me from you
I shall not keep you out.

Your might
Shall circumvent the night:
While you still press
Upon me obdurate loveliness:
And in your princely fashion

Rend my death
With absolute compassion.

I can not save you Love,
From me, relieve my Dove
Of hovering;
Nor loose your love-arrested wing,
Nor release in any wise
The hold of our tenacious eyes;
But your divine shall tremble me
And break my dead heart endlessly.
Death shall not ease me of you,
No, nor yet,
That place where men go to forget.

THE DELIGHT

I said, I have been long enough away
From my delight!
I will arise and go before the day
Has beggared princely night.
I shall go as waters go
With silver-footed flow
The moon doth lift and light.
I said I have been long enough away
From my delight.
What was the voice that answered in a tune
A ditty faint as fluting in the moon?

"Who can find a fallen star,
Pearly prey of night?
Who knows where lips of lovers are
When their bones are white?

What red can run in dead men's veins,
Who set the snow a-fire?
Or catch, by foam of vanished manes,
Horses of desire?

The wave retreated, who can stay—
The unremembered tune—

Or save for silver in the day
Colour of the moon?

Who shall engreen a winter's leaf,
Withered in the cold?
Or hold the fury of his grief,
When his grief is old?

The honey cup is full of sand
That blows with windy sound.
Who can name what viewless hand
Spilled me on the ground?"

What was the voice that answered in a tune,
A ditty faint as fluting in the moon?

FAUN-TAKEN

Who was it then that lately took me in the wood?
And was it I that lay twice seven nights on leaves,
With musky hair against my side!
That cruel hair that kept me kindly from the cold!
Gold, gold!
Of yellow eyes that glance and hide!
Am I the maddened one that goes—and grieves
For lack of laughter laughing till I died?

Oh, drouth of grapey laughter, dearth and drouth!
Twice seven days are but a blurring ring
That circles round the corner of a mouth!
Oh, wide, wide mouths that bellow so, or fling
That fluting up to birds like spurted wine!
But, ah, no more, those sounds without a name—
No more that ambiguous grace of god and ape,

Where strange feet dance upon the
dripping grape—
Those feet one must not see—that
wounded mine!

Let me but once look back again and pass.
Once only see him again—and groan and go—
The lips that laugh in the grass—
That kiss in a way one must not know!
The lips that cling the mouths of pipes and suck
The roots of frightened flowers too pale to
pluck;
The curls that vine o'er what one must not see—
Those horney hiders that so gorèd me!
Then, run and run—again to the hearths, the roofs!
But close behind,—the pipes, the pipes,—the
hoofs!

MEA CULPA

The night was living, past belief,
The lake was furtive as a thief:
The moon was wading to the knee,
And I was as bad as bad could be.

I was more living than the night,
I made the lilies drown for fright:
I was more furtive than the lake,
I hardly made the water shake.
I lurked, I listened,—touched,— and soon,
I waded deeper than the moon.

THEY SPREAD THE PLANETS OUT FOR ME

Composed in Sleep to Kallista

They spread the planets out for me,
  They made the deep so fine.
I looked to East, I looked to West,
  To choose a gaud for mine.

I took a moon, I took a star,
  I took your silver face:
But at your eyes the worlds went out,
  And left an empty place.

And at your eyes the day grew pale,
  The night put up his pelf,
The sun shut out his jewel-bags,
  And sighed and slew himself.

And at your lips the god leaned out
  And groaned with golden care:
His golden steps went staggering
  All down his golden stair.

THE TRAPPER OF STARS

The trapper of stars went out alone
On the track of his running prey,
And his eyes were the eyes of his prize that
shone
And his look illumed the way.
But anon, he sighed, and anon, he said,
"The trapping of stars is a lonely trade,
Though the golden game be won!
Ah, happy the hunters that hunt in the sun,
When the coloured fields are gay!
The birds of the night have a sorrowful say,
And the dreads of the dark bestride me.
I would I could hunt my stars by day
With a lover that ran beside me."

THE THREE DEAD TONGUES

And they were dead, three golden tongues,
  All in their winding sheets:
Three lovers came unto their lips,
  Enquiring for their sweets.

"And who have slain our golden tongues!"
  The weeping lovers cried.
"Six leaden ears have murthered us,
  And harried till we died.

"And long the tunes like hurted birds
  Will peak and pine for song,
And flocks of bonnie, bonnie words,
  They will be waiting long.

"They will be waiting poor as maids
  Whose lemans never come,
And dead babes rocking on their knees,
  Now we are dead and dumb."

"Ah, nay, ah nay," the lovers cried,
  And kissed the pretty dead.
And soon each golden tongue that died
  Was dancing in his bed.

THE SAVANT

Erudite of anguish,
Seer
Of grief,
Master of no-relief;
Savant of sorrow,
Philosopher of fear;
Doctor of dereliction,
Collegian of disdain,
Cloaked in honours of despair,
Capped with care:
Universitor of pain,
The learnèd of the dark,
Awarded, aware.
You might be too proud
Of scholarship so bright,
The achieved profession of the night;
If you were not, by accident,
The uninstructed of delight.
(Ah, my poor! Adept of iron that sears!
Academician of slow tears!)
If you were not, for all of this
Renown, and most illustrious employ,
The innocent of bliss,
The barbarian of joy.

"I LEAVE YOU NOW WITH YOUR DELICIOUS EYES"

Then I am dead with my delicious eyes.
Tell all who come,
Tell him who knocks and cries,
Who melts, who moves,
Who woos with truth and lies:
And him who makes,
Who weaves both wild and wise:
Who sings, who soothes:
And him, the rude surprise:
And him who waits
With obdurate surmise:
And him, the golden one
Who faints and flies.
Tell verse and viol,
Savants, swords and sighs,
The stride, the deed,
The splendour of replies:
All heavy hopes,
Designs that surge and rise,
And stalwart ghosts
That violate the skies.

And tell your heart
    That neither lives nor dies,
That I am dead with my delicious eyes.

BLACK POET TO SILVER POET

Your wingèd singing drops, in plumed array,
Its birds that feather, fluting, down the day,
And lift to leafy loves,
Their high and sweet incessant silver say:
Birds, deepening at dusk to nightingales,
That beat the doors of dark with soft assails,
And tender tunes the plaintive moon approves. . . .

But, when the gray sea of my silence moves,
The wounded waves with sluggard rollings part
To let out some dis-fathomed monster's head
With blind and streaming eyes: So from his bed,
Heaves up my heavy art.

WHOM SINGEST THOU?

Thou saidst,
"Whom singest thou with that ambiguous lyre?
Dost thou sing me, or dost thou sing the lyre?"
I smiled and sang:
"I sing the embraceless spouse:
Perhaps I sing thy hundred thousand thous."
I smiled and sang, till, leaning in surprise,
I saw the tears well in thy haughty eyes.

SPLENDOUR

He said, "How can I meet your splendour,
In this magnificence of my losses,
Bankruptcy of youth,
Delinquency in beauty?"
But you, in strong delight,
Ran, ran and fell upon him,
Crying out, "O Splendour!"

SOME DISHONOURED GARDEN

Some dishonoured garden be my place:
  Where the savage grass,
Shaggy son of vagabond disgrace,
  Sighs his rude "Alas,"
Over princely flowers all discrowned,
  Poverties embracing on the ground;
Bankrupt lovers hiding breasted heads
  In their beggared beds.

Hide the wrongèd laughter of the fool
  In this leafy wrong:
Drown with petals in the pallid pool
  My Icarian song.
Ragged roses and a tattered vine,
  Lean renown and broken bread be mine:
Since thy king's fare hath so wasted me,
  And I starve on thee.

AGAMMEMNON

More bold thou art
Than that Achaean king, the Trojan's dread,
Who took the crying maid of Troy to bed;
With iron breast held down that haunted heart,
Beneath his shoulder bent that burning head.

HIS STRANGENESS

Is he a lord, my love, or some bright beggared
guest
In tatters shaken by the windy blow,
This shape I dearly know and do not
know. . . .
This Protean shape that changes on my breast!
No tawny nestler now, where nests this black de-
light;
These purple locks upleaping, crows in snow,
And glooming irids, charged with heavy night,
Where late there trembled me
A golden fleece and eyes the brothers of the sea.
Is he a lord, my love, or does a shadow hold
The place of one, once golden, beggared of his
gold?

HIS BURDEN

Weary of whiteness and pallor of gold
On tresses of northmen that curl in the cold;
I fled the austere,
I fled the blue eye:
And journeying far with a star
That flamed ever fiercer, revolted from fear,
And made bold
By the high broken bars of the cold,
Like a lion leaped in the sky.

Longing for beauty of blackness, with deep
Eyes like a night that is starless for sleep,
The night's own eyes that can pardon
For softness, nor harden
With steel of implacable soul:
Sweet flagrant, the reeler in sweet,
The dissolute king of retreat,
Lord of large flowers,
The coloured and carnivaled whole
Of honeyed and harvestless hours;
Lord of the shadowy lip that sings,
Of the darkling smile,
Of delicate guileless guile,
King of all kind, caressed and careless things.

Searching for this, long search I found you after,
Master of blackness and full crowned thereby:
But ah, your flowery lip in laughter
Was like all broken lutes and buds that die!
Six full waves of wonder drowned me—seven,
And on the seventh foamed your beauty whole;
But, like an angel helled in highest heaven,
You wept with bitter burden of a soul!

HIS TREACHERY

I

Then coming like some careful one that loves too
high,
You bowed, abasing your most plumèd head,
Pearling humility with pride's emblazonry,
The cloakèd gems, hid fire, darkly red:
Making a wonder of imperial lowliness,
Of kings unkinged, warriors unspeared and sped.
"Who fears me?" said your proud eye, weaponless,
"So to the living creep the humbled dead.
For lack of you has made me dead." She heard,
Bending to lift you like a beaten bird,
Love's spoilèd pilgrim, weeping with the
cold. . . .
Sudden, she felt you terrible with gold!

HIS TREACHERY, TO ANOTHER TUNE

II

Who was he, the cheating sweet,
  That played he was her vassal,
And wept the whole night in the street
  Before he stormed the castle?

You it was that did this shame,
  Love's battered beggar when you came,
Who enter, plumed, with iron feet
  And now, so flash and flame!

HIS BEAUTY

When first she saw the pillow blazing with his
head,
She cried in terror, "Passion now is dead!
It is too much: desire is intercept,
Such beauty puts it out!" and weeping fled.

Then he with giant laughter, crowned adept
In love, like twenty moons unleapt;
"But yours is not too much!" His voice, the swell
And bellow of a brazen bell.

HIS LITTLENESS

I call you little though you are so high,
I make you little as a bird:
Little as a bird to nestle in a breast
Under the leafy cover of a robe:
Not too far under for that sidelong eye. . . .
The wildernesses eye that peeps and hides,
There where you press on mine a downy heart—
Ah, me, I fear to make you little as a bird!
I fear this downy traffic with a bird!
And faint to call you little who are high.

THE MAKER'S STEALTH

You have grown so gentle, now you have your fill,
And all this honey on your lips I spill:
I who loved the lion, must I love the dove,
Wings on my breast, where burned that shaggy love:
If you see me pale in terror of your tears,
So the maned Samson trembled at the shears.

Kiss you asleep—then down through dreams unsounded—
Plunge I upon another you, confounded,
Drowned in sterner wonder, drink more dire delight,
And play with hooded strangeness all the night!

THE FLIGHT

Tonight, a strangeness came upon me:
I, the staggering sleeper,
The drouthy kisser of sleep,
I wearied of sleeping:
And as a drunkard rises and reels from the
dark place
Where he lay dreaming,
His locks still heavy with broken wreaths and
the spilth of wine,
And finds himself, weeping with daylight;
So, I fled from you—
Out from the doorways—into the Awake.

YOU SAW ME LOVE HIM

You saw me love him. . . .
Though I crept
Under leaves to where he slept:
Though my stealthy knees,
Crawling round the roots of trees,
Hardly drew a sigh
From the flowers softly slain;
Dying without any pain,
Like forgotten babes that swoon,
Kissed too closely by the moon.
You saw me love him. . . .
Though the towering night,
Liege of lovers, lifted tall
Builded blackness, wall on wall,
Staggering sight,
Eyeless donjons dumb and stark,
Blinded parapets of dark,
You saw me love him. . . .

SO, YOU WOULD NOT FORGIVE ME. . . .

So, you would not forgive me. . . .
And your velvet sigh,
Averted from this bitter-fruited I,
Fell like a plume behind you as you went;
While, backward sent,
The wounded condor's look
Burned on the one forsook,
Beneath your spacious eye's extinguished sweet,
With soothless deserts of extreme defeat.

But I, the soothed of monsters, lulled by groans,
Lie well, consoled of vultures, nursed of stones.

SICK WITH HEAVEN

I said, "Now, sick with heaven, I turn my face
  Of Lucifer from this too lovely place;
'Twas here I wept for giants; and the deep
  Sighing of gods, that in proud secret weep
With loneliness of kingly state forlorn:

And for great lovers by crowned sorrow torn
  Of desperate loveliness,
And hard, too golden stress
  Of 'crusted robes, whose jeweled weavings, worn
With cruel weight on breasts too much embraced,
  So bruise with gems that white, imperial haste.

Let me go bare,
  I cried, of this too heavy fair,
And all this crested wealth of gilded care.
  If these rich tears shall sting that kissèd smile,
Let me be he who now shall starve a while!

NORWAY

I. THE MAGICAL HEARTS

Three magical hearts of Norge
Came over the world in ships,
And brought the night-suns of their eyes,
The liquid of their lips;
They brought their sea-souls wildly wise,
That Viking dreams enclose,
And the flowing flame of the northern skies
To redden a western rose;
The magical hearts of Norge.

And all the hearts were sea-hearts,
Wide as worlds are wide,
Enchanted well with olden tales and tunes,
And floods of stars that rode along the tide,
And fleets of full-rigged moons.

And one was like the roaring of the wave
That drives upon the rock with heavy urge,
The master-player playing to the brave,
The music and the madness of the surge.

And all the hearts were sea-hearts, beating fiercely
free,
And beautiful as shapes that beckon us in sleep,
And kind as children, kissing playfully:
And one was like the long enquiry of the deep,
With princely will prevailing,
A-search for all the secret shores there be,
And one was like a golden sea-bird sailing,
Or the silver singing of the sea.

Three magical hearts of Norge
Came over the old sea-track,
Where their helmèd fathers went before,
And took strange plunder back:
But now they take, in giving more,
A kingly trade disclose;
Three magical hearts of Norge
For the single heart of a Rose.

II. THREE

1

We were loved, you and I,
We were loved by the Three:
And the cup was filled high,
We were loved, you and I:
Though we dwindle and die,
Though we falter and flee,
We were loved you and I,
We were loved by the Three!

2

"Come back and kiss us all once more!"
Cried the Prince:
And we, pausing in the door,
Returned again—and since,
We are not as we were before.

For we are roses, roses now,
Where the wild bee sighs and sips,
And each rose upon her bough
Has three shadows on her lips:

And each rose-heart rosily
Trembles with the lips of three.
And we are roses, roses now,
Who only women were before,
And three winds that shake the bough,
Cry, "Come and kiss us all once more!"

III. SEA-COMER

Birger

Who was he
That came from the sea,
With the crested head
Of an eagle in the red
Of the sun?
Who was the kingly one
With such a grace
In his face?

Who was so kind,
With the mind
That stabbed like a sword;
And the word
Like a preying bird;
Whose streaming hand
Spilled gifts like sand;
Whose pain was the rain,
Whose mirth was an earth;
Whose eye
Was a sky?

Who was as proud
As the trumpet crying loud,

As the flying ship?
Who had the curling lip
That made
The lover's heart afraid?
Who was he
That returned to the sea?

IV. THE FAIRY CHILD

To Matta

There was a woman once
And she had a fairy child;
It was delicately wild,
And it had a different play
And a different delight;
It was too silver for the day,
Too golden for the night.

It was light
As a leaf along the floor,
Or a wind in the door,
Or the shadow on the stair,
That might not be there.

When she held it on her knee,
She wore her silken gloves,
As one, all carefully,
Holding doves.

When she combed its hair,
Golden silk,

She was faint with fairy care,
Pale as milk.

When she spoke she swooned,
Though she smiled,
For fear a word would wound
Such a golden child.

When she put it into bed,
The bed began to pray,
For fear that such a golden head
Might fade before the day.

But when she left the praying bed,
The fairy child burned bright;
Its little brothers came, 'tis said,
To play with it all night.

But when it made its little words,
In tunes that lisp and fall,
The tongue that spoke like silver birds
Was not a child's at all.

There was a woman once
And she had a fairy child;
It was delicately wild
And it left a fairy grief,
And fairy lack beyond belief.

For she gave it to a prince
Because he was so fair,

And ne'er before, or since,
Was there such a golden pair.
And he carried it away
With the far wave's foamy flight;
It was too silver for the day,
Too golden for the night.

V. MATTA JOURNEYING AMONG FJORDS

She journeyed like a flower
  Borne along the breeze,
The rocks gave up their moaning
  As she passed their knees.

The pines gave up their sighing,
  The mountains leaned to gaze
At such a silky traveller
  Going down their ways.

The tarns climbed up their edges,
  Hiding all their Fears;
To see the flying petals
  The Nökken dried his tears.

The eagle stooped to listen,
  The sun forgot the hour,
The Terrors ceased their trembling
  When she journeyed like a flower.

And we who went beside her
  With her laughing eye,
Remembering her perfume
  Forgot to say goodbye.

VI. THE STAG

The stag that owned the mountains and the tarns
  Gave us his royal right in each abyss;
  He gave it like a bright and bitter kiss,
With princely bowing of his towered horns.

He stilled for us his tarns that nursed the night,
  He calmed his hurrying mountains, row on row,
  Bucked out with flying bucks that spurned the
    snow,
And seagulled out with seagulls, flight on flight.

He called his grieving pines in serried spears,
  He called his sudden birches and his birds,
  He called his echoes for their fainting words,
And cataracts that fell in floods of tears.

He wooed us with his winds and with his flowers,
  Implored us with his shadows and his mist. . . .
  And all that follows of the dream we kissed
Is crying of that wounded stag of ours.

VII. EARTH

I have been with the ships;
I come with the salt on my lips,
  Will you take me again?
I have sunk, I have ceased,
By the surging seducer released—
  Will you take me again?
Deliver your breast
To the sea-wounded guest—
  Brown, brown!
Let me in—let me down!
Throbless and safe from the blue,
  Safe from the sorrow and sound;
Let me be trampled with ground—
  Let me be thrust upon you!
  Will you take me again?
Lick off the brine from my face,
Ground-winds that pause and that pace
    In the grass!
    Pass, pass,
Torment and tigers of sea!
  Give me a tree!
Give me a cover, a cloak!
Make room for the beaten, the broke!

Make a bed for the traitor to weep.
I forgive you and sleep.
I have been with the ships,
I come with the salt on my lips.
Will you take me again?

FOUR POEMS TO KALLISTA

I. SILK

When all the forge-fires of the day expire,
  I put on you, my love, as silk attire;
I make me fair with you, my silk, and wear
  The smile you give my lips to make me fair.

I don you as a garment, deep impearled,
  To lord it in the world;
And trail you for the stars that all look down
  With silver staring, paled with my renown
And starry gleam of me.
  And then, ah then, where is my penury?
Not mine the ragged heart that is for hire!
  I put on you, my love, as silk attire.

II. LIFT UP YOUR HANDS

Lift up your hands. . . .
And let me look at those two hearts, your palms:
Then, give me leave to lay these kisses in,
First, round the rims where the warm nests begin,
And now, deep, deep, among the blooms and balms.

I take my heart. . . .
So, loosening at last, its ancient bands. . . .
Now, make of those two kissèd palms a breast. . . .
And let me lay this iron babe to rest:
But no—what throes between your bruisèd hands!

III. THE BANQUET

I make a banquet of you
  And you cannot say me nay:
So, I spread you in the evening,
And drink away the day.

How dazzling is the damask!
  And, cresting from the cask,
How flashing is the heady wave
  That purples in the flask!

And how the lonely feaster,
  As he brims the flagon up,
Laughing underneath his garland,
  Leans his lip upon the cup!

Oh, is there any ear, now,
  So delicate and vain,
To listen if the wine should sigh,
  Or if the bread complain?

IV. I WOULD NOT HAVE YOU SEE ME

I would not have you see me sobbing out,
  When my low candle shakes into the blast,
And all my armoured prides are put to rout;
  Nor that wild eye be on you at the last.
Great love, be you not leaning there to meet
  The obliterating fall of that defeat;
Lest, made too clear, in ways, the rude duress
  Should violate your sovereign tenderness.

Be far away, and live in safer doubt,
  Unknowing if I like a stranger passed;
Too strange for courtesies of love's farewell.
  Be far away, lest such a shame befell
Me, in dying, as that you should call,
  And clownish I not answer you at all.

AND NOW IT SEEMED TO ME

And now, it seemed to me
My life was but a drowse,
Where thought stole dubiously
As moonlight under boughs
In shadows of a shaken dance,
Lustering what was, perchance,
With what was not;
While many a darkling spot
Was caverned doubt,
Where question, like a candle, is put out.

I dreamed that I was cold;
Or that the summer slew
The spring with fangs of gold;
Or that the forest drew
A fever from the autumn and was burned.
I thought I turned
This way and that with thirst
Of this and that, and dreamed
Of best and worst;
And seemed,
Oh, most imponderable seeming!
To love in dreaming.

THE THIEF

"Where did you go while I slept?" I cried,
To my citizens, one, two, three.
"I waked but once," the Heart replied,
"And wept and turned on my other side
And again slept patiently."

"And thou, my wanton one and wild,
Didst thou stir before the lark?"
Said the Tongue, "I lay like the unborn child,
Deedless and dumb and dark-beguiled
And confounded with the dark."

"And thou, the tameless, that dost lie
"Beneath the folded cover?"
"I slept," the Body made reply,
"Forgot the cold, forgot the cry
For the unremembered lover."

"But who went forth, who stole away
Of my citizens three and four?
Who creepèd out while asleep I lay,
And rode the dark till the dawn of day,
Though he never opened door?"

"The Thief went out, the Thief was the one!"
Cried the citizens all within.
"He laughed in the worlds where there is no sun,
And went to a place where place is none,
And he sinned a deadly sin!"

INDIAN SONG

See how you wake again, the Hidden!
Ah, ah, ah!
Two little breasts of man too poor for kissing!
No dreams of any milk at all!
Sweet poverty—I lay there
Two pomegranates heavy with their wine.
See how you wake again the Hidden!
Ah, ah, ah!

Shape beneath the leaves,
Crying in the grass so,
Calling for my dead thoughts!
Ah, ah, ah!

LEE

(*A Portrait*)

Darkling eye and golden hair,
Velvet captive of a long despair;
Lonely heart and Yorick's tongue,
Gay and valiant, and forever young;
Soul that weaves a magic like the moon,
Soul that voyages—a vanished tune!

Mimic, dancer, cavalier,
Silky hand the proud horse loves to fear;
Sailor and adventurer;
Dark eyed peoples look and long for her,
And the Spaniard claims her for his own;
She who lingers, loves, and goes alone.
Tall as the Giralda and as fair,
Darkling eye and golden hair!

Golden hair and darkling eye,
Where the golden sorrows ever lie,
Velvet prisoners they are, and wild;
One, a woman weeping for a child,
(Her own childhood lost among the deeps,)

One, a child that for a woman weeps,
One, a wide desire that never sleeps.

Golden hair and silken knee,
It is wide, the longing for the sea!
Darkling eye and petal lips,
Wide the windy longing for the ships!
Painter's hand and poet's heart,
Wide the cloudy hunger for an Art!
Sigh that smiles and smile that is a sigh;
Golden hair and darkling eye!

MANUEL'S BEDS

Six white beds in a row,
Six fairs that lie thereon.
(*Two beds that are folded and gone!*)
Four sisters lying pale;
Each young breast bears a rose,
Hid with the virgin's veil
That no wild winds disclose.
Their eyes the nights desire,
Night wreathes each viney head
Where pillowed curls are spread. . . .
White prey of white-hot fire,
One sister burns in bed.

Two brothers lie, on guard,
One by bright beauty starred:
(*For two, their far new beds are hard!*)
He leans, awake, and hears
The burning sister's tears
And little wounded words,
Until they come no more.
He keeps four singing birds
For his sisters four.

RICHARD'S HOUSE

'Twas in a woody place the wonder went,
A drunken house with flowers and leaves besprent,
A drunken singing house in sweet carouse,
That reeled among the boughs.

I never saw so mad a house before;
I ran and leaped me through the running door;
I leaped and joined me to the radiance
Of lovely mad ones all that dwell therein;
Of one half boy, half maid, in desperate dance,
And one whose lips let out a silver din,
The poet's necromance.

And one was like a shaft of ivory,
Flushed faintly where a rose had left a stain,
And fair to see,
Whose soul was music smiling in its pain.
And one, majestic, leaned within the door
With deep, deep eyes, who heard the lutes no more.

And ah, the great mad grandmother was there!
The guilty one that made old age too fair,
That made youth-lovers turn in love with snow,

Fain for lost gardens where lost roses grow.
Her unrepentant youth hung on the cross
Of her triumphant ancientry,
And his strong laughter at his lovely loss
Drew blossoms from the tree.

Oh, mad grandmother, did I dream you quite,
Oh, ivory shaft, and you, half boy, half maid?
Or shall I find you on a summer night
Where reels the drunken moon through shaken
shade
To dance with that mad house to silver din,
Inebriate of the poet's flute within?

THE TWO DESPAIRS

To A. A. C. O 'N

Your despair and my despair
Went out to walk and take the air:
They went to walk, and they were pale
As moons that rainy winds enveil,
And stilly wept into their hair,
Your despair and my despair!
They walked until the death of night,
Through many a misty world estranged,
When they came back their names were changed,
We could not tell them from delight.

THE DESERT-DWELLER SAID:

I

You who crowned me for beauty in the market
place,
You leave me alone at last.
At last, you leave me alone with my deformity;
And I am as one who goes into his own house,
Closing the door behind him.

II

I smile at last—being alone,
And I release my sighing.
For I love my hatred of myself more than I love
your love of me,
And I love my own disdain more than I love
your worship,
And I love my paleness more than you love my
vermilion,
And my dereliction more than you love my
honours,
And my terror more than you love my valour,

And my doubt more than your faith in me,
And my despair more than your hope in me,
And my defeat more than my triumph before you,
And my disgrace more than your woven wreaths.

CONSCIOUSNESS

Then as I watched, with lost soul through lost
eyes,
I saw, between the windy earths and skies,
The nothingness take form with hollow sighs;
Until, at last,
A face was there, with consciousness aghast!

Two shapes beside the soundless staring hung;
One seemed the Lust-of-being, that gave tongue
And made advance
With hoofèd dance;
And one, the very Wound-of-being, nursed
His trapped heart in its shaken cage accursed.

WHY HAVE YOU TURNED AWAY FROM ME, MY PRIDE?

Why have you turned away from me, my Pride?
What shall I do without my splendour?
If I am to be humbled,
I who am not used to half things,
I must have excess of humbling;
The surface of the earth is not low enough for me,
I must be lower;
Like a fierce stone struck from heaven,
I must pierce to my lowness!
I must be inearthed.

NOW, MY LYRE

Now, my lyre again, again!
Come back my coloured song!
Sullen singer dumb with rain,
Bird belated long!
Bird that hid a bruisèd beak
Through broken-hearted dark,
It is morning, swell and speak,
Lift, my lark!

For we who died while it was night,
Lift up a louder cry;
And stone-blind eyes that come to light
Sigh out a mighty sigh.
The tongues that were as still as stone
Like broken rivers run,
And stricken birds make golden moan
That shakes the brazen sun:
While Lazarus, proud with new desire,
Heaps Death with Life's disdain,
And fills his savèd song of fire
With fury of the slain.

IS IT MY LAUGHTER?

Is it my Laughter?
Is it my Laughter that comes here,
This stranger bending in the rain?
How unfamiliar the face is,
  This divine harlequin-face,
    Wet with rain!
  Who called you, Forgotten?
Who called you, Mountebank, Lost one?
  My sorrow, you say?

HIS DISTANCE

Ah, he went away too far!
  Farther than lost leaves and lovers are!
With loss of singing lips,
  Greater than the loss of golden ships,
  Steeper than the losing of a star—
He went away too far.

Farther than the farthest flute,
  Farther than the belling of his lute
And bright Balboan words;
  Fleeter than the nest can call the birds,
  Fainter than the fall of winds that mute,
And farther than a flute.

THE RECOVERY

I led him back from hell's disgrace,
  But held my eyes the while;
I took the hell-cloth from his face,
  But turned me lest he smile.

I sealed my eyes, yet feared that he
  Would smile there in the gloom,
For even sealèd eyes must see
  That wonder—and their doom.

The withered garland from his crest
  With blind hands I unbound;
I shook to feel his breathing breast,
  And wept upon the ground.

I took the windings from his hands,
  The death-vest off I took,
And loosed the long, long linen bands,
  But never dared to look.

I shook the hell-damp from his hair,
  And turned me, not to see
What followed pale behind me there,
  The boy-Eurydice.

LIPS AND EYES

The little boys that are your smiles
  Go quaintly in and out,
With witty plays and antic wiles
  Of goatlings all about.

The penitents that are your eyes,
  Each with his prayer appears,
And care too cursed for any cries,
  And lovely ghosts of tears.

Ah, those that play with quirk and quip,
  And these that daily die!
Repentless urchins of the lip,
  And culprits of the eye.

TO A GREAT PRAISING POET

O, fruiting poet golden with your fruit,
  I, mute,
And leaning in my tunic's fold,
Gather the downfall of your leafy lute.
  Heavy to hold,
Ah, heavy to hold,
This fallen weight of fruited gold!

She falters 'neath the Olympian ornament,
  Who treads with golden load
    (Where once she trod
  Uncrowned and inillustrious went),
Like her of Argos golded of the god.

Ah, poet august, in this my honoured hour,
  Drenched in your spreading power
    And radiant rain of you,
  My singing lifts beneath the gleaming shower,
      And Perseus stirs anew.

RETURN

I

When I went back there
I was as cautious as a dead man.

I passed the palm trees with care,
Not looking too intently,
For fear of spilling my heart too soon.

And I waited long before daring the house,
The coward of delight.

But the house was there
Still trembling;
The sea still leaned listening up the walls,
Below the alert
Of the windows
And in the room. . . .
The perfect grief was waiting.

II

When I went back
To take leave of you again,

You were still sitting there;
But you had the look
  Of a painted king
That has been gone a thousand years.

WAR

I. WAR

Escape thee—
The knowing—the sight!
The red on thy dress! The bright,
The terrible brightness of red
On thy garment that steams,
Thy garment the sun cannot dry;
The thing in thy hand that streams
Like the beak of a vulture fed,
The wound of thine eye,
Thine inconsolable lip,
Thy scutcheon of scarlet, thy feet
That drip. . . .

I hide me!
In front of my eyes
I draw down the scarves of the skies.
I heave up the mountains and hold
Their shoulders between.
I lift up the sea for a screen.
I hide me in purple and gold
Of singing. I deaf me with lyres.

I crouch with the curlèd, the sires
Of singing, the pipers that smile;
I hide me with glozing, with guile,
With laughter, and sighing and sleeping,

With feasting and fast,
With wine and with weeping.
With groaning of labour and love,
With anvil and violin.

But ever, at last,
Thou partest the wall where he lies,
(In sleep, or sobbing, or song,)
The hider; and lookest in. . . .
With thine ensanguined eyes—
With lethal looks and long.

II. I LEFT MY PIPES

"And I will slay, and I'll be slain,
If needs must be to keep
The happy woods for dreamers fain
Where fauns and dryads sleep."

I left my pipes and pipers fair,
Farewelled each leafy wight;
And fierce upon the foemen there,
I drove into the fight.

I thrust one through his spreading breast,
I broke one at the knee,
I clove another's curling crest
And throat of ivory.

One died in weeping, like a child,
One like a stag that cries,
And one with looks so brightly wild,
Was like a god that dies.

Mine was the battle, and by me
Were saved my grove and plain:
I turned me once about to see
The faces of my slain.

Oh, golden fall that flowered the lawns!
  Oh, honied mouths that bled!
They were the faces of my fauns,
  And dryads, that were dead.

III. THE DEAD MEN FALL

And all day long I cannot see
  The day, nor be consoled,
For strange things falling on my heart
  That make my heart cold.

Like leaden leaves that fall and fall
  From a strange and stricken tree,
The dead leaves falling on my heart,
  That weigh heavily.

My heart that was as red as gold,
  It shone at dead of night,
The dead men falling on my heart
  Have turned my heart white!

O, pale, pale heart be paler still
  And beat no more at all,
Where heavy, heavy, one by one,
  The dead men fall.

IV. ANOTHER SPRING

Another Spring!
  Where no birds sing,
  Nor any newborn thing
Makes downy curling in the nest;
  No leaf to heal the trodden crest
  Of the hill. No wing.
Oh, fool of Spring!
  Freeze, freeze,
  You blasted trees
That shall not wake to any breeze,
  Nor honied sigh
    Of passing butterfly.

Another Spring!
  'Neath the relenting suns,
  Only the long guns,
Wolves of winter, gore her grace,
  Defile the virgin's face,
      All unredressed,
  And spit on flowers of her breast.

Another Spring!
  I, bleeding in the ditch,

Behold a lean, bereaven bitch
Come whimpering.
Another Spring!

V. TO MATTHEW ARNOLD, 1917

'Tis well you went away and closed the gate,
  Taking your fine, your sad, your sweet, your
    light,
With that long, delicate lip and passionate,
  Before this night.
Did you divine, and did you fear to lose
  The pace long-vestured and the priestly song,
And so went softly lest the cries confuse,
  Or wounds should make you wrong?

VI. TO A POET RETURNING FROM CHINA, TO THE WAR

Oh, recovered, oh sweet!
Come with the far, far feet,
  Out of the far,
Heavy with gold as you are,
  Heavy with danger,
Burdened with beauty of farness,
  With fair that is stranger
  Than fear.
Oh, recovered, oh sweet!
 Strange is the dust on your feet,
    (Let the far be near,
    Though we are afraid!)
 Dust of topaz and jade
    Of golden gods that caress
From the dust, appeased and wise.
    There is gold on your dress,
  There is gold in your golden eyes;
 The averted eyes that lament
 From our breasts for the way you went;
 That gaze o'er the shoulder and live
    In desperate wonder withdrawn,
     In the glittering gone:

That ever look back and burn
From the cruel garland we give—
The ruinous rose of return.

VII. WAR-WIFE

Ah, he is young who lords it over me!
And tall and fair,
A gallant sight to see;
And all his hair
Ferns wreathingly,
And he is young who lords it over me.

Bring me a ship
That I may take the sea,
And find again
The difficult, sweet underlip
That speaks with pretty pain,
Like youngest birds there be.
Ah, he is young who lords it over me!

And sternly great
In harnessed bravery;
He walks in warrior's state,
With girded waist,
Alas, no more embraced
Save by the sword-belt heavily,
And leather to the knee,
Though he is young who lords it all over me!

And strange and sad
E'en in his laughter he;
For fate that falls so mad
On many a bridal lad
Has used him fatefully.

The loveling like a bee
That winds tear from the flower,
Fades farther, hour by hour,
Is taken by the sea;
Ah, he is lost who lords it over me!

VIII. THE ROADS

All the roads lead back to France,
  Where young men used to go to dance;
But now, they go in other wise,
  There is no dancing in their eyes.

All the roads lead back to France,
  Where young men used to find Romance:
Today, a stranger face she shows
  And wears another, darker rose.

To France, where young men went to school,
  To France where young men played the fool.
Their young eyes look another way,
  They will not play the fool today.

They will not play, nor take their books,
  Nor question much a maiden's looks;
And where they laughed, so, as they went,
  Their laughter will be different.

Their singing will not sound the same,
  Their hope will wear a sterner name,

For gentle lads as they advance
  Are fearful on the roads to France.

And fearful are the young, young eyes
  That war shall make so fiercely wise;
When lads shall such a lore attain,
  They will not play at games again.

The flowery roads that lead to France
  Are filled with pomp and circumstance;
For as they go along this track,
  They meet young dead men coming back,

All going home on windy feet;
  They do not greet them when they meet,
They do not greet, they do not glance
  At dead men in the roads to France.

They do not tremble as they go,
  Life's flower to the dream they throw;
Youth's lily turned to be a lance,
  When all the roads lead back to France.

IX. WHEN THE DEAD MEN DIE

In a world of battlefields there came
  Strange things abroad by night,
For the dead they have but little shame
  When their hearts are turned to white.

And we who war, and wake to sigh,
  Are apt to hear the slain,
Whose dead hearts go abroad and cry
  Not to be killed again.

For they are now in Jacques and John,
  Hans, Beppo, and the rest;
Their broken hearts are beating on
  Inside each breaking breast.

Their murdered hearts they make a moan
  For the deaths they died before,
And shattered soul with shattered bone
  Doth dread to die once more.

For many deaths their moan is made
  When the mortal charges start;
It is hard to leap the escalade
  And carry a dead man's heart!

Remember, men of guns and rhymes,
And kings who kill so fast,
That men you kill too many times
May be too dead at last;

That hearts may be too dead at length
To beat again and cry,
And kings may call in vain for strength
When the dead men die.

SOFT SONG

After the War

Let us be soft,
Let us not be brave;
Nor put more iron ships upon the wave,
Nor put more iron questions to the Dumb.
And if one calls, let us no longer come.
Let us forbear,
Leave and loose us there,
Lean and lie like this,
Let us kiss,
But let us be soft.

Let us be soft,
Let us not be wise;
No more with fatal words contrive replies,
Nor lace the corselet of the shuddering will,
Nor climb for curious wonder any hill.
Let us delay
Let us make the day
Into night with sleep.
Let us weep,
But let us be soft.

THE SULLEN SON

The Maker said, "The work is done.
Stand up, my Clay, my sullen son.
Stand up till seventy years have passed,
And you are crumbled clay, at last."

The sullen son he heaved a sigh,
And heavily answered, "Let me lie."

The Maker said, "You shall be knowing
Ten times seven years of going;
And seven hours of mortal bliss. . . .
And death will be the end of this.
But sundry of my dead sons say
The price was not too much to pay."

THE WAKING HOUSE

Was it the night-bee, or a bird,
  Or sighing in the street?
Or but the house's heart that stirred
  And started, then, to beat?

Or but the house's soul that woke
  And shuddered with its care,
Lest all its sleepers' hearts be broke
  In sleep while sleeping there!

For careful houses weep, they say,
  Between the dark and light,
As hearts that have not broke by day
  Are apt to break at night.

But weary houses must awake
  When women rub their eyes,
And from the near-by cradle take
  The early babe that cries.

The old man dons his memory
  And wonders how to live,
And just how old a man must be
  Before he can forgive.

Before he can forgive the day
  That kills his youth again,
The youth that comes to bed to play
  When old men sleep from pain.

The swain that vowed him to despairs,
  Now rosily recants:
The Night folds up his showman's wares
  And takes his elephants.

He takes his silver queens and dim,
  His leapers, man by man;
His lions follow after him,
  His Abyssinian.

On boats of morn his tents embark,
  He calls his harlequins;
The Merry-Andrews of the dark
  Make off as day begins.

The bed where two together sleep
  Where once one wept in bed,
Now feels the long hair wake and creep
  To wreathe the husband's head.

The mouse foregoes his tiny snore,
  The phantom leaves the stairs,
The sleepy butterfly once more
  Resumes her heavy cares.

The flowers on one window sill
  Turn prudent heads about,

So not to see against their will
  The curly climber-out.

The dwarf down in the cellar makes
  His little dusty bed,
The god up in the garret shakes
  His hyacinthine head.

The song is looking for the lark,
  The brooms beseech the maids,
And those that died while it was dark,
  They sigh and get their spades.

The window yawns, the bedposts reel
  Fatigued into the day;
The wakened cover laughs to feel
  The maiden's breasts at play.

Her little shoes that on the floor
  Have braved the darkness through,
Like little dogs look toward the door
  And long for drinks of dew.

The shutters now consign their charge,
  The floors commence to creak,
The chimney-smoke is high and large
  The pot begins to speak.

The cordial door opes, bowing low,
  The room puts out its lamp,
And down the road that houses go
  The house begins to tramp.

THE POET'S TWO QUEENS

"Ye say these Twain did on their gowns,
Their shoon o' Spanish leather,
And fading from their seven towns,
Sae fared them forth together?"

The Twain did on their golden words
With which their lord bedecked them;
And like the plumes of purple birds,
The jewels flashed and flecked them.
The people cried, "For goodly gear
They dim the summer surely.
The day will be put out, we fear,
The sun it shines so poorly!"

And they did on each red, red wound
With which their lord attired them;
The wine-red west it sighed and swooned,
So much the west admired them.
And blood-red rubies sighed and said,
"These queens are 'sprent so gaily,
We seem as rubies done and dead,
They make us gleam so palely."

AS YOU WENT

As you went, as you went,
A golden banner backward bent;
As the Lost look o'er the shoulder,
As the retreater brightens, bolder,
As the fear grows cold and colder;
As the wind repents and turns,
As the last kiss burns and burns!

NIGHT SONG

What was so sweet before?
What shadow passed?
What feet along the floor
Went fierce and fast?
Was it a closing door
(Locked, at last,)
That was so sweet before?
Was it a sigh,
Or more,
That was so sweet before?
Was it the cry,
(Sudden as a bird,)
That lovers most adore—
The sound without the word—
Pressed
From the stricken breast—
That was so sweet before?

Is it tears, or rain?
(The wind begins to roar.)
You wring your hands! Again?
What are you listening for?
The wind's disdain?
There are no sweetlings more
That were so sweet before!

THE RUNNERS

"Run by my side," you said,
Shaking your windy head:
We sped.

We run, we run, we dart
With your Herculean heart,
We do not part.

We run, we leap the crag,
I hide from you, my stag,
What I drag.

Ever our speed the same;
You do not guess the shame,
You, master of the game,
I, the lame!

THEY SAID, GO AND ASSUAGE HIM OR HE DIES

They said, "Go and assuage him or he dies,
Handle the Horror with a silken glove.
Tears to the Terror. Rain for outraged drouth.
Fondle the Furious. Take the doomed a dove."

What shall I do for you, my Raging—
Beguile the old wronged thunder of his groan,
Take the revolting sea into a lap,
Soothe the sullen meditation of a stone,
And wet those outlawed eyes that will not weep!
Console the tiger, rock the wolf to sleep!

PIGEONS

Did you hear me howling all night long?
Yesterday, they took away my pigeons!
I have no use for anything but pigeons,
I cannot pray for anything but pigeons,
And yesterday, they took away my pigeons!

Who are they that come defiling pigeons—
  My silken, soft and silver pigeons,
  My cool, my bright, my burning pigeons!
I could not sleep for thought of pacing pigeons!
      Proud pigeons!
      Pageantry of pigeons!
I whined all night for thought of humbled
          pigeons—
Of frightened kings
And splendours tarnished down,
Of lordly throats unlorded,
      Lovers unloved
  And queens unqueened!
Yesterday, they took away my pigeons.
Did you hear me howling all night long?

FIERCELY KIND AND BLACKLY BRIGHT

Fiercely kind and blackly bright,
He feasts the minstrels, night by night;
He feasts the men of lyre and wit,
Nor hardly gives a sigh of it,
The secret lyre he hides from earth.
His smile it listens well and long,
His sadness charitable to mirth,
His silence, hospitable to song.
His shadow makes a place to play
Where little children take delight.
What sorrow haunts along his way,
Fiercely kind and blackly bright?

THE BETRAYED

Poor cradle-song

Fooled one, fooled one,
  Hush your little grieving;
Because you were so little
  We fooled you into living.
Because you were so little
  We gave you to the tear,
But your father and your mother
  Were so young last year.

Fooled one, fooled one,
  I never thought to tell you
What a fix the world is
  And how they buy and sell you.
You should have a golden cradle,
  You should have a silver stool,
But when your little words come,
  Don't let the words be crool.

Fooled one, fooled one,
  When my dove is sleeping,
I'm playing that you *don't know,*
  Till cruel dawn is creeping;

Like a safe little dream-babe,
That neither sees nor hears.
But oh, *it is your looking,*
With your little wild tears!

Some day, some day,
In scarlet coat and breeches
You'll be chasing foxes
With your fine hound bitches;
And sporting velvet ladies
To the King of Ireland's ball,
And if you see me by the road,
You needn't look at all.

THE DAY THE DOOM WAS FIXED

The day the doom was fixed at last
  And the sign fell down the sky,
I called my hundred souls to me
  And told them we must die.
My hundred souls fell shivering
  And made a mighty cry.

My hundred souls cried out amain,
  And begged more days and hours;
My wise souls wept for foolish things,
  Desires and dreams and powers;
My fools bemoaned the soul of fools
  And violins and flowers.

One said "I feel the pang, the haste
  Of those that die too soon!"
And one would wait a little while
  Again to see the moon.
I said, "We dare not see the sun,
  We cannot face the noon!"

I said, "We cannot dare the day
  That strikes us from above!"

O'NEILL

Sighed one poor soul, "They murmur on,
The wind, the wave, the dove!"
And one complained his woeful state,
Yet unappeased from love.

The tallest soul he heaved him up
With roaring as of thunder,
And cried, "My curse upon your hand!
Like grass you plow me under!
And it was I that saw the god
And was half god with wonder."

YOU THOUGHT I LOVED YOU

You thought I loved you,
Because I smiled.
You did not know the dread of stars that drove me,
You could not know the mirth of moons that move me,
Nor all the winds that weep me wild,
You thought I loved you,
Because I smiled.

You thought I loved you,
Because I groaned.
You did not know the fear of fiends that sue me,
You could not know the deaths that did undo me,
Nor minds of men that in me moaned,
You thought I loved you,
Because I groaned.

FOOL SONGS

I

There was a lady fair that loved a fool,
A heavenly fool that kept the flutes of heaven.
She said: "For one thing wise men learn in school,
He knows seven."

She said: "He knows one secret of the sea,
And one of mountains all mooned out with moons,
And eagled out with eagles. And of me
He knows a secret set to all his tunes."

And the lady sang and said,
"From bells I'll never part,
For it takes the wisest man
To break a woman's heart."

And the lady said and sang,
"There is a heavenly rule,
That a woman's heart is safe
In the breast of a heavenly fool."

II

It is a fool that keeps the flutes of heaven,
A fool is master of the lutes and lyres;

And he is wisest of all angels there,
And captain of the tall and flaming choirs
That sing before the Unutterable Fair.
It is a fool that keeps the wise in heaven.

TO A POET COMING TO PARIS

Out of the deeps you appear!
And is it a day, or a year
That we were apart,
My vagabond Heart?
Since we sang so,
And rang so,
Rattling our bells,
Shaking the clappers of heavens and hells?
It was long,
The pause in our song,
And no sea and no ship
Brought a merchandise
Like the ore of your eyes,
Nor the fine, fine coin of your lip.

But now,
How
You *enjambez* the edge of the earth,
Out of what mirth,
Or what faring, *funèbre!*
Crac! You vault into this Paris *celèbre!*

No, you lounge in, *flaneur:*
An effect of lucent *loisir*

Mantles your headlong career
Toward Her.

With your air of the stroller, the same,
  Gentle and speedy and sure
Is your wild and wounded and pure
  Quest of "The Dame." *

Now, to search your pockets for pearls!
  Poet, out with your snare!
(See how the leaf uncurls!)
  Thieves of the Beau, we share!

Thieves of the Beau,
  We uncover the find, we show—
The plunder unveil.
  We know!
Why have we gone so pale?

Why have we gone so pale?
  Look, where it comes again!
The towering of a sail,
The bannering of a mane,
  The delivery of fight,
The lances of the night,
  The lion's pace,
The scutcheon of a King,
    The Face,
      The Thing!

* This poet gave to Beauty, herself, the title of The Dame.

Shut the door!
Though it is Paris *dehors,*
The *inécrasable,* the *sot,*
Who did not know Death
When they met, breath to breath,
Sinews of Rodin and face of Watteau!
Shut the door!
It is here, as before,
The phantom that shatters the heart!
The Look! The Vesture . . . once more!
The *Fougue!* The Ghost! The Art!

Welcome, Ghost-seer, perverse,
Fool to his fellow, like birds
Of a feather. What words
Have you in your purse?

You are rich! What plenty for play!
There are more when these are gone.
We are spendthrifts of grief, we are gay!
We will play this ghost for his *feu sacré!*
The game is on!

We will play this king
For his crown,
For his ring
And his ivory town.
While the night is young
We will play for his Tongue.
When the night is old

We will play for the gold
Of his mighty eyes.
When the larks arise,
His mantle we will part;
And when three times the cock-crow cries
We'll toss for his terrible heart!

Mon vieux!
So, my hearty, you've really come!
In the night, the sound of a drum
And a flute at dawn gave word.
Was it you, or a bird?
Mon vieux,

THE TOO WITTY HUSBAND

The ghosts of Homer and of Herrick, too,
  Inhabit him, the epic and the lyric, too;
Still more, that stalwart, he that will not down,
  The ghost that drew the Hamlet and the clown.
    (Featest of conjurers, I lately wonder
    How *you* contrived to keep the two asunder!)

A Merry-Andrew grinned a moment since
  Where I had turned me to behold my prince:
Who would have dreamed a king so rude in play—
  Methought I loved a mountebank today!

But now, I met my stateliest in the way
  And leaned on Prospero . . . no such noble
      luck!
Drubbed by the son of Sycorax, I pluck
  Me from his paws and then, am pinched of
      Puck!

I came to lead the royal one to bed,
  And majesty stood twirling on his head!
Ah, how I fainted with the clown too near—
  I closed my sight on that wide, jigging leer!

    Starry repenter who then bowed above
    My healèd eyes . . . again, the king in love!

SECOND FIDDLE

Now, since it is the fashion
  To wear this kind of shape,
With neither pain nor passion
  I meet a passing ape.

I meet with equanimity
  That noble passer-by,
And view his form's sublimity
  With firm and equal eye.

And yet, that something waving!
  That something lithe and slim,
Which in its brave behaving
  So decorateth him,

The added grace thus making
  The lordly state of mind;
At that, my pride forsaking,
The ancient grief awaking,
  I miss the frisk behind!

THE EVENT

The sleeping houses stirred in sleep,
  And folk who slept they smiled,
And those who wept all ceased to weep,
  And birds were dawn beguiled.

For suddenly the town was red,
  It gleamed a crimson glow,
And he who had not gone to bed,
  He groaned, and said "I know."

LINES COMPOSED IN SLEEP

But if my love outlast me,
    Drug his thirst with amber drips
From the wells where once I cast me,
    When I sailed in briny ships;
For houseless love, the ruthless,
 Weeps with winter torn and toothless,
 So, soothe the sullen sootheless—
    But never touch his lips!

INVADER

A dirty urchin climbed the tree
  Where sat the throned and plumèd me:
I brandish but a golden tongue,
  And charm him who defiles my young.
Honied curses grace his sins—
  The murderer slays to violins!

THERE WAS A FOOL

There was a fool
  And he sat catching flies,
April in his mouth
  And Winter in his eyes;
  And he was sad,
For he had
  The heart of a king.
    Sing, sing!
It is sad when a fool has the heart of a king!

There was a king
  And he sat on his throne;
His courtiers were dull,
  So he laughed all alone;
And he was glad,
For he had
  The heart of a fool.
    Rule, rule!
It is glad when a king has the heart of a fool!

THE WOMAN OF PROPERTY

Irish Song

Do you think at this day you can call me and keep me,
You that was good to me once and no more?
And you that was bad to me, now you can weep me,
Weep as you laughed with your laughing before.
I am the wind-flower, long winds they sweep me—
I am the corn, and the reaper can reap me,
I am the clay, with the young roots to lover me,
I've got me own grass, and plenty to cover me.

SING A SONG OF SAGES

Sing a song of sages,
  Butterflies of stone,
Every wight his wages,
  Every dog his bone.

Carry pap to Titans,
  Creeds for dying fools,
Brooches for hanged men,
  Lullabies for bulls.

Ribbons for the gibbet,
  Briars for the bed,
Scarlet for the blindman,
  Brides for the dead.

Velvet for the wolf,
  Poetry for posts,
Violins for vultures,
  Trinkets for the ghosts.

CAPTURE

Make way! I have a war to wage on roses!
Do not impede me,
Let the lovers lead me;
Those for whom the cloven bud uncloses,
For whom the brazen breezes break the roses!
Let not the curious
Retard the furious!
The daring doomed one who this rage discloses.
My wounds defy you,
As I run by you
To where the villain of delight reposes,
The foe who fools me in his forts of roses!
The white shall yield him,
The red shall not shield him,
Though the dearest dastard dreams and dozes!
The sweet shall not stay it
Nor darlings delay it—
My capture of the culprit in the roses!

TWENTY-SIX EARLY POEMS

I

AND FEW THERE ARE

And few there are who live, alas,
And they are far from here,
Who know how young and dear I was
When I was young and dear.

O'Neill

II

I SIT A BEGGAR IN THE PORCH OF LOVE

I sit, a beggar in the porch of Love;
Closed is the door I could not hope to win,
But when another, careless, enters there,
I seize one little, blinded look within.

III

SHALL I CALL YOU AND CARRY YOU, NOW?

Shall I call you and carry you, now,
In the arms of my singing?
As swift as the bird from the bough,
So wildly up-winging?
Shall I call you and comfort you low,
With runing of rivers a-flow,
With murmurs of crooning and clinging?

Shall I call you and cast you a-far,
In the might of my singing?
Like winds that are wounding a star,
So fiercely up-flinging?
Shall I call you and clamour your pain,
With thunderous ruin of rain,
The tears of my terrible singing!

IV.

HE IS SO LITTLE AND SO WAN

He is so little and so wan,
  This love I lose my life upon,
A little careless lad, but sweet;
Still, turn your idle smile on her
Who wastes her spikenard and her myrrh,
  Forever on your feet.

For who could ask a little lad
  To love, for loving is but sad,
(Sweet Joseph into bondage sold!)
Still, turn your idle smile on her
Who wastes her spikenard and her myrrh,
  Forever unconsoled.

V

IF THOU REMEMBEREST ME

If thou rememberest me,
It will be
Not for my sweetness,
Nor the high completeness
Of my noblest folly;
Nor for the melancholy
That lay dim
Upon mine eyelids' rim;
Nor for my deeper laughter,
Or the silence that came after;
Nor for my thought that found thine
Compassed, clasped and bound thine:
But, if thou rememberest me,
It will be
As a gentle slight thing,
Some poor and playful light thing,
A blind clown dancing blindly,
But thine own fool and kindly—
If thou rememberest me.

VI

WHERE ARE YOU MY DEAR?

And where are you, my dear, my dear,
    My dear so soon forgot?
The dear that was so dear to me,
    But now belovèd not.

And where away, my dear, my dear,
    To whom my heart was kind?
Now that I love you, love, no more,
    You hang upon my mind.

VII

YOU WHO CAN, COME CHARM ME

Ah, you who can, come charm me!
I lapse, I pass,
Like the purple in the glass,
And the charmless hurt and harm me.
Ten thousand men
Come by, and go again,
And their wise, wise words alarm me;
I dull, I dim,
Like the bubble on the rim
Of the cup that would disarm me;
Sweet fool of mine,
Save the credit of the wine,
Ah, you who can, come charm me!
Where e'er you be,
Sweet fool, unknown to me,
Ah, you who can, come charm me!

VIII

BUT IF YOU COME TO ME BY DAY

But if you come to me by day,
  I shall not know at all,
Nor hark your foot in any hall;
I shall not know your look and way,
  (Unless you kiss and call.)

No daylight-dear are you for loss,
  For man to win or weep,
But one the careful Night shall keep—
A fountain dim that flowed across
  The desert of my sleep.

Oh, draught of dreams! Past sound and sight,
  Where never man could mark—
  Nor listen any drowsy lark—
I held you in the hollow night
  And drank you in the dark!

IX

DO NOT WEEP NOW

Do not weep now while the evening goes,
While that wounded rose
Drops a flight of fainting petals there
On the heavy air;
Every one a dying butterfly,
Falling like a sigh:
Do not weep now while the evening goes.

You shall weep tomorrow like the rain;
See our window pane,
With one little candle all alight
For the coming night;
How the hut waits, hidden in with leaves,
The last of our reprieves. . . .
You shall weep tomorrow like the rain!

X

YOU WHO PIPE SO LOUD

You, who pipe so loud, there, making lusty love songs,
You, who walk so close with cheeks that kiss;
You, who sit alone, there, making plaintive dove-songs,
Crooning to the sea of this and this:

You, who shake the skies, there, with your lover's thunder;
You, who sleep so ill for waiting tryst;
You, who speak so wild as men who tell a wonder,
All your kisses I have kissed and kissed.

I have laughed your laughter, I have wept your weeping,
All your little songs I sang before;
Come not with your lutes, then, where I lie a-sleeping,
I, who am a lover now no more.

XI

SHUT IN THE JUNG-FRAU

A safer place a man needs not
From enemies a quiet spot;
A foeman who could find me here
Is worthy of his pot of beer.

A weary man like me, fore-spent,
Might view this dwelling well content,
And nothing lack and nothing rue,
If 'twere not for this accident
Of iron spikes that run me through.

XII

UNHASP YOUR DOOR

Unhasp your door and let me in!
  God knows the place where I have been!
Then ope your heart so pure of sin,
  And warm my body and my soul.

Then ope your heart so fair that is,
  Your bosom white as white rosès,
And in your kirtle and your kiss,
  Oh, warm my body and my soul!

"From off my door-latch loose your hold,
  Nor let the wind in from the wold;
My heart it is too small and cold,
  To warm your body or your soul."

XIII

I MADE A LITTLE EATER

I made a little Eater
  Upon an idle day,
A jolly little trencherman,
  He ate my care away.

A jolly little trencherman,
  When he sat down to sup,
He gnawed me to the naked bones
  And ate mine honour up.

XIV

WHO BEFRIEND ME

Who befriend me,
Who would mend me,
Who full wearily would end me;

I who dream here,
Groan and gleam here,
Lift my fountained cries and stream here,

I, the lame
Fool of fame,
Singer of a secret name,

Thus salute you,
As I flute you,
Saying softly, not to mute you:

"Knight and dame,
Praise and blame
To my belled head sound the same."

XV

THE SISTER

Kallista

She came to show her beauties dear,
  And brought her kissing eyes.
Her breasts were like two little hills
  Where the snow-drift lies.
Her hair went reaching down and down
  With little arms that hugged and slipped,
And it was gold and it was brown.
  Her little feet, they twinkled, tripped,
And sweetly, foolishly, they skipped.
  Her sister kissed her on the eyes
Where hidden angels went and came,
  She drew her hair back from her throat,
And there she did the same.
  She kissed her hair on either side,
She kissed it on the part,
  She kissed her on her wide young breast
Above her golden heart.

(And then she took her by the waist
  And laid her on her bed;
And then she said unto herself,
  "Good God, if *this* were dead!")

XVI

TO A LIONESS

The cage is empty where she paced,
  The tawny-flanked, the tawny-eyed,
The great of heart, the great disgraced:
  The cage is empty where she paced,
No more the humbled mighty stride,
  The gleam along her golden side;
  The cage is empty where she paced.

But yesterday, to scrutinize
  The deepness of her golden eyes!
Between the bars they gazed so still,
  One could have thought her iron will
Had died—and died her great revolt.
  But hot and wild as flame through smoke
The heavy lion-heart out-broke
  Through pain and patience, bar and bolt,
Through frozen hope and dead surprise
  The deserts burned us from her eyes.
The cage is empty where she paced,
  The tawny-flanked, the tawny-eyed,
The great of heart, the great disgraced:
  The cage is empty where she paced.

XVII

THE TWO SORROWS

Sorrow,
Sorrow, my pretty little sorrow!
Once you were a dove to cling and coo,
Then you followed like a lamb and loved me—
I made a song of you.

Sorrow,
Sorrow, oh, my monster sorrow!
Now, how changed your look! I dare not be
In the room alone with you, my sorrow,
Lest you strangle me!

XVIII

YOU ARE SO KIND NOW YOU ARE DEAD

You are so kind, so kind, now you are dead!
I could take your hands,
Loose the linen bands,
  Make them clasp my face,
  In a late embrace;
To my lips at last,
  Hold them fast.
(Once before you go,
It might be so.)
Lifting back your hair,
I could make it bare—
The patient forehead there,
  Take or spare,
  Stare and stare.
Where the eyebrows turn,
I could fix and burn
Interrogation stern.
  So appease my sight
  On that house of white,
Where beneath the ring

Of your tresses' wing,
Lived of late, the Thing;
Lived of late, the still
Inexorable Will.

You are so kind, so kind, now you are dead!
I could draw you up—
As to lips the cup,
Fold you near,
Press and press you here,
Crush your wreaths of rue,
And ease my heart on you!
You are so kind, so kind, now you are dead!

XIX
YOU WHO HAVE TAKEN EVERYTHING AWAY FROM ME

You who have taken everything away from me,
  See—peeping round the bole of any tree
In this forest's mute advance,
  See how I sing and dance,
  Making merry in my place.
Did you look for Hagar in my face,
  At whose tread the pansy dies,
And peer for Ishmaels in mine eyes?
Look rather at these little legs that play,
That circle May poles, making endless May,
  Of woman turned to be a fay.
And see, on every flower a pearl appears
  Where fell, in dancing, all my little tears.

XX

HERE I CAN STOP AT LAST

Here I can stop at last,
  Here cease from running:
Here all is tight and fast,
  Raining or sunning.
Safe from your eye of stone,
  Like toper drinking.
Here I can lie alone,
  With my own thinking.
Here I have my delight
  Where Horn-foot dances,
Playing the livelong night
  With hiding fancies.

XXI

THE MAKER

The lover rejoicing in deserts,
  So went I, the one unregretful,
The smiler in desolate places,
The careless, the proud, the forgetful,
The laugher—although you had stone me,—
You, turning compassionate faces,
Believed me alone and bemoaned me,
  Unknowing the bed, the embraces. . . .

XXII

BLOW AND BEAT UPON MY HUT

Blow and beat upon my hut,
  Wind of man's disdain!
Loose my thatch and leave my fire
  Drownèd in the rain;
Let fall the winter of my fate,
  But me you have not slain!

Birds of prey that pluck and flay,
  You break my heart in vain!
Desire of the heart is naught,
  Nor wonder of the brain,
Nor is it death that conquereth,
  For me you have not slain.

God, or goblin,—what you will,
  King, or clown-in-pain,—
Vanished laugher! who can that
  Deep insolence restrain!
The earth has hid the dead man's tears,
  But me you have not slain!

XXIII

JAMIE

The Ballad of a Dead Boy

And that was he that died last night!
  Did no one hear a sound?
The dead they die so stealthily
  When you have turned around.
They wait until you have forgot,
  Until the moon is drowned.

To die it is a secret thing—
  The closing of the book—
The furtive dead they are ashamed,
  The dead that are forsook;
So death it is a secret thing,
  And never man must look.

Perhaps, they know what we will do,
  And why we dig the snow;
They'd rather be in their own beds,
  Than to be usèd so.
And thus they die so carefully,
  And hope we shall not know. . . .

They cleared the snow. They dug the ground,
(They worked with little joy,)
They piled it back, they piled it back,
And sweat to their employ.
Who would have thought 'twould take so much
To cover up a boy!

They piled it back, and yet they say
He never gave a start,
They piled it there upon his hair
Up-curling from the part;
They heaped it long on his shoulders strong,
They heaped it on his heart.

They piled it on his young, young lips,
They piled it on his feet,
We saw it rise on his eager eyes,
His eyes that were so sweet.
We saw it drift on his limbs so swift
And cover him complete.

They took his thought, his mighty hope,
And piled them high with mire,
They piled it on his wistful heart,
Upon his knightly fire,
They piled it on his undone deeds,
His unappeased desire.

And strange, we never stayed their hands,
We stood there in a ring;

He was so patient all the while,
We heard no murmuring;
But he must have wondered that we stood
And let them do this thing.

The hole it was so deep, so deep,
We did not hear him sigh;
Nor did we know if he complained,
Or gave one stricken cry;
But, oh, he must have wondered sore
That we stood careless by.

We cannot keep the Dead, they say,
The Law it disallows;
And so we hid him near the gate
Beneath familiar boughs.
And so at night there, he can see
The windows of his house.

But still we wish he would not come,
And with his earthy hair,
Go walking round and round the house,
Upon his feet of air;
For we should be as dead as he,
If we should see him there.

He walks and walks around his house,
And we can hear him go.
He must believe he is forgot,
We let him weary so.

He walks about, and yet there are
  No marks upon the snow.

The young dead are so lonely there,
  At night beneath the rain,
They come and come unto the door
  To be let in again;
And when we will not lift the latch,
  They look so through the pane!

He is so homesick in the night,
  When beds are warm within!
To hear him stealing to and fro,
  It gnaws us like a sin;
But it is a shame to call his name
  When he is looking in.

It is a shame to speak to what
  The outlawed dead become.
The Law is hard, the Law has barred
  Them out and struck them dumb.
It is a sin to call them in,
  Because they cannot come. . . .

When he went up the stairs that night,
  He whistled as he strode,
When he came down the stairs again,
  He was a heavy load.
When he came down the stairs again,
  He was a mortal load.

And thus his doom it had been writ
In the book of Secret Law,
And so they came and killed him there,
And no man ever saw.
He did not know, and so he gave
A kind of a hurrah!

He did not know that it was writ,
His heart it held no fears,
As calm as when on quiet sea
The quiet moon appears,
He dreamed, and often in his dream,
He called upon his dears.

They came and marked him on the brow,
(Where little ringlets hung,)
He did not know it all the while
And so he laughed and sung:
He did not know they were killing him
Because he was so young. . . .

His youth it must seem strange to them,
The old and sullen dead.
He took his golden youth to them,
His gold untarnishèd.
He looked upon the world and then,
He took his youth and fled.

XXIV

THE BED

Jamie

For you the Spring he made a bed
  With all young flowers embroiderèd,
The sweetlings of the year he led
  And wove for you a purple spread,
    With starry cypress at the foot
And moon-flowers at the head.
For you the Spring he made a bed.

But when he saw you would not come
  For all the moon and May,
He rolled his lacy linen up,
  And sighing went away.

The Summer made a bed for you
  Of silk to cover from the dew,
Of silky grass that bent and blew,
  With only roses peering through
    To see the silver sluggard there,
For pretty posies to bestrew,
Where Summer made a bed for you.

But never did the Summer see
  The drowsy dear encurled.
She, weeping, took her tapestries,
  And went across the world.

Then Winter made a bed as white
  As moons that freeze the livelong night;
You left the fire, you left the light,
  And laid you down in love's despite.
    You laid you down and slept full well,
And Dark that leaned on you was bright,
Where Winter made your bed so white.

The Winter never was so proud;
  He shut the chamber door.
And years may come, and years may go,
  But Winter goes no more.

XXV

BLIND EYES

Jamie

Blind eyes, blind eyes
  That gazed so long,
Blind eyes that loved to see,
What are you looking at, underground,
  That look no more on me?

Stone lips, stone lips
  That spoke me kind,
Stone lips that called me fair,
Whom are you speaking to, underground,
  Is any lover there?

XXVI

JAMIE

His heart was like a friendly hearth
  Where the friends retire,
And we would sit at evening
  To warm us by the fire.

Now, he is a fallen house,
  The grass is in his door,
And though you go, at evening,
  He bids you in no more.

Come away, the grass is cold,
  The wind is all about:
You cannot warm you at a hearth
  Where the fire is out.

LOVE-ENDING

Go, go,
Complete the overthrow!
Low lutes that were so loud!
Proud eyes for weeping!
(O, poor that were so proud!)
Tall grain for good reaping—
Slain kings for sound sleeping!
Cold hearts no hearth shall warm!
Long roads for rueing!
How to perform
This wonder of undoing!

Beat down
The alabaster town!
With what downfall
Of amethystine hall!
Shatter the towers,
The feasts of fruit and flowers,
The crystal cups and all—
Tear the silver sleeve
And break the golden bell!
How to achieve
This pale feat of farewell!

O'Neill

Part, part,
Loose the prisoned heart!
The velvet vassal flies—
To the wind he goes!
But no, he turns and lies
Against me like a rose,
With his slaying eyes!
Intercept the sun
That I may not see!
How to be done
With this Gethsemane!

Wait, wait,
Rend the delicate,
The woven strands with care:
With care divide
The intertwinèd hair,
And side from side
Withdraw the fair from fair!
Make far the fair and fain!
Fold back the stubborn arm!
How to attain
This irretrievable harm!

Undo
The arms that tether you!
Unclasp the impearlèd belt!
Softly not to wound;
Let the girdle melt,
Parting, half unfelt

Where once the lover swooned.
Still, the fingers hold;
The moony cincture tying!
How to be bold
With this excess of dying!

Be still;
Yield th' embracing will!
Close the fluted ears
On flutes that cease to speak.
Never any more
Spill the honied tears
Down the kissèd cheek!
Come out and close the door,
Nor listen at the key.
How to restore
The plucked fruit to the tree!

Then, then,
Turn back and part again!
Console the ruined love!
The crownèd creature falls
With his illustrious walls.
How fares my dove?
See who leans and calls!
Look once more. And so—
Close from further knowing.
How, now, to go
With this redeemless going!

There, there,
Leave the golden Care!
Let the heapèd heaven—
The princely prostrate lie.
Last—the Look be riven!
Then go carefully,
Lest he stir and sigh.
So, with subtle stride
The dead are left with speed.
How now to hide
The consummated deed!

TO THE TERRIBLE MUSE

You asked, "Are you afraid of me at night?"
My monster with the eagled head,
My spreading banner on a bed;
Your embattled splendours purple-ing my white.

But I said, "Nay," with bold, foolhardy breath,
"The desperate who holds you dear,
Full fed with Fate, is fed with fear
Too full to falter over you, or death."

A SKELETON ADDRESSES SOME CHILDREN OF A LATER TIME WHO PLAY WITH IT

So, little wantons, pull me out,
  And rattle these chaste bones about.
A hundred years of moons and suns
  Have looked in vain for these poor nuns,
These white and shy and cloistered things
  That once were wild as winds and wings.

Loose me from that meshèd rust
  Of the long, long mouldered hair;
Shake the dust
  From mine eyeholes. Let me stare
Deeply at the day, the while
  You gaze agog at this great smile
That gapes so wide for lack of lip,
  And gives the laugh without the quip;
As some poor clown dismay arrests
  That has forgotten all his jests.

Now, crack my knee-joints merrily.
  In days when I was called a she
They danced like leaves upon a tree;

Nor did they clack so, deep enough
Sheathed in hyacinthine stuff.

On this bank, embroidered well
With many a purple flower-bell,
How gaunt the starveling you incline,
Lusty once with meat and wine!
Ah, the dullest dead man knows
Dust's a lean fare for the guest,
And the buxom sluggard grows
Lank with too protracted rest.
Who would think this barrèd cage
Once held a heart of lovely rage
And ardent rivering veins of man,
Through which the great red runner ran!

And who would say that this was one
Who carried high beneath the sun
Proud lips whose words were lutes,
And lions, nightingale and dove;
And on her breast two moony fruits
Where the lover leaned to love—
Of princely beauty half afraid!

And now, you little lads and maid,
Without a by-your-leave, or thanks,
Take my shanks
To beat your little drum,
And with little mirth alive,
Stick a flower in the dumb
Singer's mouth, and then disband

The mysterious fingers five
Of the woman-master's hand.

And, my little wantons, now
With many a droll buffooning bow,
You set me up amid the flowers
And cry with infant wit,
"A name for this lean man of ours!
A name, a name for it
That here doth leanly sit!"

But of these and those
Of the names you chose,
With all your infant wit,
You did not name me. . . .

THE RETURNED

When I come,
Do not wonder if I shall be dumb.
Nor stare
At long roots knotted in my hair,
Or the earth that lies
Round my intolerable eyes;
Nor interrogate me much—
And on your oath, I charge you not to touch!
  Let me hide
What hangs along my side,
In this purple vesture folded well,
Keep secret the unspeakable.
  As I lie
At the feast beside you, hold your eye
From slipping sidelong when you pause and think;
And do not look too closely when I drink.
  Do not tell the row
Of other feasters what you know,
  Nor confess
What you guess,
Nor speak of whence I came;
And if you call my name,
Do not start, when I sit

Without reply, who have forgotten it.
Pour the wine and quaff,
Not to shake so when I laugh—
This lean laugh. . . . Pour again!
Drink and drain,
Lest you fear and fall
Before this shape equivocal,
  Dreadly changed,
And the look estranged
  Of my hiding eye.

  Take care! Not too near by!
Lest you faint with cold
  Of my state insuccourably old—
  Lest you break and be
  Aware—past remedy.

THEN, EVEN THEN

Then even then, you the King-maker,
Reaching your coronal hands
Down into my darkness,
Wreathed me again!
And I, that was humbled with hell,
Was suddenly heavened with honour,
And staggered with crowns
Where the shades are.

THE GIFT

Now that I am lame,
Now the fierce is tame,
Now the mane is shorn,
And the banner torn;
  I bring thee, lord,
  The shattered sword.
Take the tattered fool,
Take the broken tool,
Take the last offense,
This ruined insolence!

FIERCE SPLENDOUR

Fierce Splendour, since you have a mind to slay
What you have loved a while;
O, let not this, my strangeness, stop or stay
Your hand—nor my persisting eye;
And question not too close the deathless smile
Which lifts my lips that die.
My lord,
Thus some poor Jew is slain—and cannot sigh
For looking at the jewels on the sword.

THE GREAT CLOWN

They said I must go on without my laughter:
And hereafter,
Look, like punished age, in careful wise
From my chastisèd eyes;
Too wise for late complaint,
Or any hidden sobbing, fine and faint.

They said I must go on without my tears,
Caught culprit of the years;
And leave my purple garment, golden-hemmed,
For the gray tunic of the Time-condemned,
In penalty for youth's too lovely wrongs.

They said I must go on without my songs,
And still the tongue that cried
With silver crying, wild and windy wide,
And break the lyre in my hollow side.

They said I must go on without my heart,
And so, part:
Lean as lost Lazarus, ere he turned
His frozen looks on those large eyes that burned;

And so, go:
Without one Job-cry for my over-throw,
Without one groan, beneath a bell disguised,
Of fools un-Paradised.

They said I must go on without my laughter;
And thereafter,
Jog with eld and bear a leaden load.

But ah, my laughter met me in the road!
But ah, my giant hailed me in the way,
The motley master in his pied array!
The stalwart uncontrite!
All undefeated by the threat of night;
Too poor in penitence, too rich in folly
For priestly melancholy;
Too tall for whips of loss,
Too careless for a cross!

A gallant outlaw, saving life and hoard
Of some poor captive of an evil lord;
So he, my roarer, with grimace sublime,
Made rescue of me from the train of Time;
And like a flash of spears,
He saved my songs, he saved my ruined tears.
"What god so weak of wit and iron cold
Would make a fool grow old?"
He cried, and seized me in a shook embrace,
Unhooding there the Great Clown's kingly face.

THE CANDLE

They said, "You will be milder, by and by."
Yet Time, perverse, but gives their words the lie:
My curious candle now, beyond a doubt,
Streams higher in the wind that puts it out.

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